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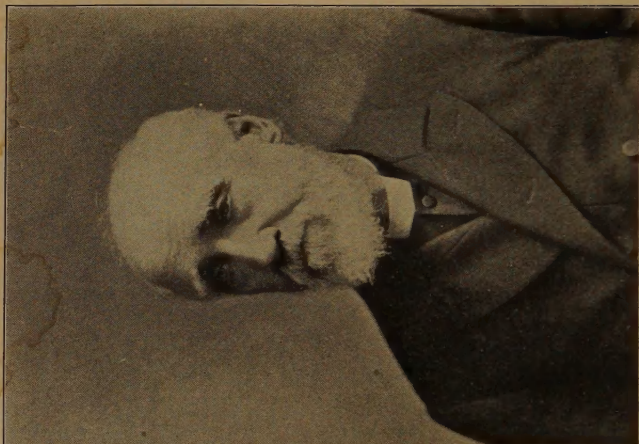


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The Laos of North Siam

BY

LILLIAN JOHNSON CURTIS

WITH INTRODUCTION BY

' ROBERT E. SPEER '

ILLUSTRATED FROM PHOTOGRAPHS TAKEN BY
THE AUTHOR



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By LILLIAN JOHNSON CURTIS

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To my Husband
and
Parents,

Whose faithful devotion made the writing
of this book possible, is it affectionately dedicated

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Introduction

There is no other mission field which has had to wait as long as Laos for an adequate account of its condition and needs as seen by the missionaries. Indeed there are only half a dozen books which deal with these northern states of Siam and their people. One of the best of them, Mr. Hallett's *A Thousand Miles on an Elephant*, is written with cordial appreciation of the missionaries. Indeed it is dedicated to them and to the neighboring Baptist missionaries in Burma.

"TO

THE AMERICAN MISSIONARIES IN BURMA,
SIAM, AND THE SHAN STATES,

I DEDICATE THIS BOOK,

AS A MARK OF THE

HIGH ESTEEM IN WHICH I HOLD THE NOBLE WORK

THE AMERICAN BAPTIST MISSION AND

THE AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN MISSION

ARE ACCOMPLISHING

IN CIVILIZING AND CHRISTIANIZING

THE PEOPLE OF INDO-CHINA."

An old book entitled *Siam and Laos as Seen by American Missionaries* is full of valuable information, and Miss Fleeson's *Laos Folk Lore* preserves some of the simple stories of the people.

But none of these or of the other books on Siam, attempt any full treatment of the Laos people and religion and government.

Mrs. Curtis is well qualified to write a book to fill this vacant place. For four years she was a missionary at Lakawn, and combined with exceptional opportunities a quick discernment and a kindly interest in the people. Far away from the currents of travel and intercourse, the Laos states are practically unknown save to the lumber merchant and the missionary. And of the two it is the missionary who masters the language, enters into the life of the people with the sympathy which is essential to knowledge, traces up the secret of custom or idea or institution, and strives to understand the hearts and minds of those among whom he dwells. As in almost every other part of Asia and in Africa, so here we owe our first and often our fullest and most reliable knowledge of the people and country to the missionary.

The two founders of the Laos Mission, Dr. McGilvary and Dr. Wilson, are still connected with the mission. It is to be hoped that some day their autobiographical reminiscences may be made available. The only difference between these two venerable missionaries—loved throughout the Laos states by all, rulers, common people, and merchants from the West—and missionaries like Moffett and Paton, is that these old Laos missionaries are unknown to the world. In character and accomplishment they rank with the missionary saints and apostles. Mrs. Curtis has done a good service in

telling as much as she has here told of their life and work.

An account like this is an encouragement to faith. But it is also a summons to duty. The work for the elevation of this remote people has but begun. It should be carried forward to completion. Into these poor lives and open hearts we are charged to bring that gospel, which will deliver them from their fetiches and their fears, which is the promise of the life that now is as well as of that which is to come.

ROBERT E. SPEER.

New York.

Author's Introduction

IN this day of travel and books it is as easy a matter to feel acquainted with our antipodes as it is with our next-door neighbor. So enterprising have tourists to the East been that they have pushed their way into central China, across Siberia, and even into Tibet, and so faithfully have they written of what they have seen, heard, and observed that we, sitting in our easy-chair at home, can all but believe that we, too, have been there. But there is one fair land that is yet closed to the reading world, a land that at once charms and interests, but which is so shut in by its mountain walls and distance from the sea that it is practically inaccessible to the tourist. Readers of current missionary literature know of the Laos people, as there is a most successful mission among them; and those who have been following the trend of eastern politics of the past few years know that Siam has recently lost to France all her land east of that noble stream of waters, the Me Kawn-g, or Cambodia, most of which is inhabited by the Laos. Aside from this, but little is known of the Laos, save by those few men and women who have come into direct touch with them, principally as missionaries or foresters. A few men have entered or

crossed their country in an official capacity, and as a result we have from the gifted pen of Colquhoun an excellent work, *Amongst the Shans*, and from Mr. Hallet as reliable and interesting a book, *A Thousand Miles on an Elephant*. But these books and others barely touch upon the Laos, and nothing but a mention is made of the mission there.

The author has recently spent four years among this people as a missionary under the Northern Presbyterian Board, not only living in the larger cities and towns, but touring among the remote villages, living in close touch with the people, and often spending days and nights in their own homes. Thus she feels that she knows them, and loving them as she does she wishes to bring them before the American public, that they, too, may become interested in them and may have their hearts stirred to do something toward sending to them the Word of Life.

It is the writer's purpose to give concrete facts and incidents which will be illustrative of the Laos people as a whole. It is a difficult task to speak of a foreign people and not to do so from a prejudiced point of view, especially when they have so many moral anomalies and contradictions as have the Laos. But this, too, has been constantly borne in mind by the writer.

It is with pleasure that I acknowledge my indebtedness to the Rev. W. C. Dodd, of the Laos Mission. Though in the United States on a brief furlough, he has taken time to read the manuscript

of this book and to give me many valuable suggestions.

And so with this word from the author to the reader, we will turn to Laos-land with all its witchery of tropical splendor, and with all its darkness of demon worship.

LILLIAN JOHNSON CURTIS.

Winnabow, N. C.

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The Laos of North Siam

CHAPTER I

THE SHANS

"It was in the one thousandth year of Buddha, A. D. 457, that the great and fearful King Ruang lived. His advent and the glories of his reign had been previously announced by Gotama himself. His father was King of Haripunxai. One day he retired to a quiet mountain for meditation and there met the Queen of the Nakhæ*, whose beauty and charm won his heart. She became his wife and brought forth a son whom she placed upon the spot where she had first met the king, then disappeared, after having placed upon the child's finger a ring given her by the king. Now a certain huntsman accidentally discovered the child with the royal ring, and brought him up. The youth having one day entered the court the whole palace trembled; the king recognized his son, and acknowledged him. In time he became king under the name Pra-Ruang. He threw off the yoke of the King of Cambodia, and reduced to his authority all the sovereigns in his vicinity. In the year one thou-

* The Nakhæ are a fabulous race dwelling under the earth.

sand of the era, Pra-Ruang abolished the Buddhist era, and ordained a new one; which is the era of the Siamese and is called Chulasakkarat, the lesser era. Incensed because the Emperor of China would not unite with the other kings for the purpose of abolishing the era, Pra-Ruang, having embarked in a ship with his brother, reached by some wonderful means the presence of the Emperor of China, who professed himself to be his disciple and gave him his daughter in marriage. Pra-Ruang returned with a large retinue of Chinese; introduced the characters of the Siamese language, and appointed his brother King of Chieng Mai. In consequence of these and other great merits he was favored with the possession of an immense white elephant with jet-black tusks. Proceeding one day to the river the king disappeared; it was thought that he had rejoined his mother, the Queen of the Nakhae, and would pass the remainder of his life in the realms beneath.”*

The early history of the Shans is lost in the mists of antiquity and this touch of color from the pages of their chronicles, now kept in the Royal Library of Bangkok, reveals how hopelessly interwoven are the facts of their later history with the unreal, so much so that the one cannot be satisfactorily disentangled from the other.

To-day the Shans are settled over the main part of Indo-China, reaching over into Burma and up

* See Bowring's translation of Bishop Pallegoix's *Chronology*.

into China. Though English writers know this people as Shans, they call themselves Tai—Free People. There are two principal divisions of Shans, namely, Western Shans and Eastern Shans. The eastern branch includes the Siamese and the Laos Shans. It is among the Western Shans that the American Baptist Missionary Union has so successful a mission and into whose dialect of Shan Dr. Cushing has translated the Bible. The Northern Presbyterian Board has had a mission among the Siamese Shans for nearly sixty years, and among the Laos Shans for over half that time. These three principal branches of Shans have much in common, especially in vocabulary, characteristics, and customs, their chief difference being found in their written dialects.

Though so little is accurately known of early Shan history there are a few facts of which we can be sure. We have such authority as Professor Terrien de La Couperie, and other students of ethnology, for affirming that originally they came from China and are of old Aryan stock, and recent missionary exploration has also established the fact that they are still immigrating annually from Yunnan Province, China. Certain it is, though, that they are not of the same race as the Chinese, and there is much more in common between them and other branches of the Indo-European races than between them and the Chinese. Professor La Couperie proves conclusively that this Shan people was settled within the great valley of the Yangtsi at the time that the first wave of Chinese migration

swept over the northwest corner of China. It is thought that this event was simultaneous with the appearing of the Aryans upon the frontiers of India, which date is usually fixed at 3000 B. C. In the reign of Yaou, 2356 B. C., we find that the Chinese have crossed to the south of the Yangtsi, so the Shans must have been pushed first to the southward about this time. We can think of them as moving farther and farther southward, ever since the time that Abraham was leading his pilgrim life in the land of his adoption. From this time on down the centuries until about one hundred and fifty years before Columbus discovered America, the Shan history cannot be accurately given. There are, however, a few facts about those early days of which we may feel sure, namely, that the Shan kingdoms reached great power and splendor; walled cities were built; wise laws were made; Buddhist monasteries were reared, and kingdom fought against kingdom with immense armies. Guns and gunpowder are mentioned long before the discovery of the latter in Europe. The same year, A. D. 1584, there is mention of the capture of Portuguese vessels which had taken part with the Cambodians against the Siamese.* However, we may be sure that a high degree of civilization was never reached, and that the people were heartlessly sacrificed to the whims or caprices or necessities of the rulers. In A. D. 1350 the old capital city of Ayuthia was founded, and from this date we have an authentic

* See Bowring's *Siam*, Vol. I, p. 54.

history of Siamese Shans, which necessarily embraces more or less of Laos Shan history.

The Laos Shans, or simply the Laos, to-day number between five and eight million souls. There is absolutely no method of obtaining a correct census and so the number is variously estimated. The figures quoted represent the limit of both extremes. The term "Laos" is an arbitrary one, being the French spelling of the name of a single tribe of Laos, namely, the *Lao* tribe. But the Siamese call all the Laos in their kingdom and all in French territory *Lao*. And so for want of a better term, the Laos Mission voted in 1897 to "use the name 'Laos' for all who use the written character that we have in our mission." This includes not only all the Tai tribes within the areas mentioned in the following paragraph, but also the non-Tai hill tribes: because the written language of such of them as have a written language at all, is Laos. Thus the term "Laos" is generic and includes a large number of branches of Shans which all speak dialects of a common language and have marked family resemblances, so much so that they can be classed under the common name, Laos Shans. The mass of them are nominal Buddhist, but a few of the tribes are not. Tattooing is not common to all, and the men of a few of the tribes wear their hair long. The dress and many of the customs vary; and we could go on enumerating differences, which nevertheless are but varying traits and characteristics of the same great family of Laos Shans. There are six principal branches of Tai Laos and several

Laos hill tribes. These will be found classified in a chart in the appendix of this book. The language written and spoken by the Yuan Laos is recognized by all branches as the "Mandarin" language of the Laos. Some of the hill tribes speak dialects of their own, but many of the men of the tribes and some of the women understand the Laos vernacular. The non-Tai hill people are thought to be the remains of once mighty empires.

The Laos are living under four flags. On the north they are under Chinese rule, on the west under British, on the east and southeast under French authority, and on the southwest they form a part of the Siamese nation. They are scattered over the immensely rich valleys of the upper courses of the Salwin, Me Ping, and Me Kawng rivers. From two to four millions of the Laos—the Yuan Laos—live under Siamese rule: and to this branch of the family the Presbyterian Church has hitherto confined its organized work, and it is this same branch with whom this book deals. This people will be spoken of by their generic name, Laos, as they are so known in all American current and missionary literature. It will be readily seen that the mission includes as yet only a small part of the Laos.

As thus restricted, the term Laos includes the people of seven principal provinces, namely, Chieng Mai, Lakawn, Pre, Nan, Chieng Rai, and Chieng Sen, each of which takes its name from its capital city. The city of Chieng Mai—marked Zimmè on old maps—is now the largest and most important,

though the youngest. In A. D. 1293 when Europe was in the throes of the dark ages it was destroyed by the West Shans of Muang* Mau. A few years later it was rebuilt by the son of the King of Lakawn and upon the same site. The Laos have many a wonderful tale that they tell their children concerning those days, especially of one of their kings who even as an infant showed such physical power and such an unruly spirit that he broke every cradle in which he was laid, until finally an iron one was made which withstood him. This king lived before the destruction of Chieng Mai by the Western Shans of Mung Mau: so we see that the present custom of placing babes in a swinging bamboo cradle or basket is one of very ancient date.

In the seventies of the eighteenth century, these states became tributary to Siam. But troubles arose and the reigning sovereign of Siam, Chau Prasat Tawng, invaded the Laos states, laid the country waste, plundered the villages, and brought away many thousand captives to be slaves forever more. The king of the Laos escaped into Cochin China, but was betrayed into the hands of Siamese, arriving in Bangkok about the close of the year 1828. He here underwent cruelties of which it is a shame even to speak. We will quote only in part:

"He was confined in a large iron cage, exposed to the burning sun, and obliged to proclaim to every one that the King of Siam was great and

* "Muang," or, as the West Shans say, "Mung," means province.

merciful, that he himself had committed a great error and deserved his present punishment. In this cage were placed with the prisoner a large mortar to pound him with, a larger boiler to boil him in, a hook to hang by, and a sword to decapitate him: also a sharp-pointed spike for him to sit on. His children were sometimes put in along with him. He was a mild, respectable-looking, old gray-headed man, and did not live long to gratify his tormentors. His dead body was refused cremation or burial and was hung in chains on the river bank below Bangkok."*

Since then there has been no trouble between the provinces and the capital, and gradually Siam has weaned them of their state power until at present every province has a Siamese royal commissioner appointed directly from the throne in Bangkok. He is not only responsible for good government and collection of taxes, but he keeps the king in touch with the spirit of the provinces.

Though the Laos and Siamese are both Shans and have much in common, a stranger would note at once many marked differences in natures, habits, and customs of these two peoples. It is conceded by all that in morals, and refinements of life as well, the Laos are superior.

* Bowring's *Siam*, Vol. I, p. 62.

CHAPTER II

SIAM AND ITS CAPITAL

To know and understand the Laos it is necessary to be familiar with Siam as a whole. So many excellent books have been written recently on Bangkok or Siam that it is unnecessary to spend much time upon the subject. We will only touch upon it sufficiently to enable us to understand the Laos people.

The kingdom of Siam, including necessarily its provinces, has suffered much within the last few years by loss of territory. Its boundary toward Burma was somewhat contracted in 1891 by a commission; and the famous treaty of 1893 granted to France all Siamese territory east of the Me Kawn-g, and on a twenty-five kilometre strip on the west of the river, France feels at liberty to erect stations, although the treaty provides that this strip shall be a neutral zone. Much is involved in these simple statements, for politically Indo-China is in an unsettled state and is full of very "ticklish" problems.

France has appropriated in all three hundred thousand square miles of Indo-China, while Siam now claims but two hundred thousand. By the agreement of January, 1896, between England and France, they guaranteed to Siam the integrity of territory embraced in the basins of the Me Nam,

and Me Klong, Pechaburi, and Bangpakong rivers, together with the coast from Müang Bang Tepan to Müang Pase, including also the territory lying to the north of the Me Nam basin, between the Anglo-Siamese border, the Me Kawng River, and the eastern watershed of the Me Ing.* This amounts to territory about the size of Germany, with a population of some ten millions or more.

The ruler of this realm is by name, Prabat Sombetch, P'ra Paramendr, Maha Chulalongkorn, Baudintaratape, Mahar Monkoot, Rartenah Rarchawewongse Racher Nekaradome Chatarantah Baromah Mahar Chakrapart, P'ra Chula Chaumklow, Chau yu huah, but he is called by foreigners simply King Chulalongkorn I. In appearance he is handsome, and bears himself with genuine kingly dignity. He has a magnetic charm of manner that has won for him the personal devotion of everyone with whom he comes in touch. He is a well-read and well-traveled man, his last extensive tour having embraced the greater countries of Europe. He reads English with ease and speaks it fluently, though it is etiquette that all the court language should be in Siamese. This fact often misleads a foreign visitor: for King Chulalongkorn, like all orientals has a marvelous command of his features, including even the play of the light in his eye; and under the most trying and extraordinary circumstances can keep his countenance as imperturbable as rock. Thus a visitor would never have the slightest hint from

* See the *Statesman's Year-Book*, 1900, p. 1014.

the expression of his majesty's face that his words are understood until they are rendered again in the vernacular by the palace dragoman.

It is difficult to convey to a democratic people the degree in which the king is the head of the state. According to Henry Norman he can say with literal truth, *L'état, c'est moi*. To quote further:—

“To every Siamese the king is not alone the ruler of the land, but the actual possessor of it,—of its soil, of its people, of its revenues. Omniscience, omnipotence, and absolute rightness are the inherent attributes of the king. To illustrate this, here is a perfectly true story. A Siamese prince received from London a packet of Christmas cards, one of which bore the text, ‘Glory to God in the Highest!’ Without in the least understanding the sacredness of these words to Christian ears, and without the remotest intention of irreverence, he erased the word ‘God’ and substituted the word ‘King,’ and sent it to the palace. He had simply been struck with the peculiar appositeness of the expression, and the card gave the liveliest satisfaction in royal circles.”*

This ultra veneration for his majesty comes largely from the unity of church and state. They are absolutely one. The king is crowned with the most impressive religious services and thereby becomes *Pra Chau*. By this coronation there gathers about his majesty the sacredness of a god.

* *The Peoples and Politics of the Far East*, Henry Norman, p. 434

There is around palace life in Siam as much splendor and picturesqueness as we read of in the *Arabian Nights*. This book, by the way, is much liked by his majesty, and was translated by him for his merry group of children before they were old enough to read it in the English. The palace itself, with "its graceful pointed spires of the grand halls of audience; and the gleaming tiles of the golden pagoda, and the many-colored roofs of the Royal Temple, give a richer effect than anything to be found east of Calcutta."* It is a city in itself, surrounded by strong, thick walls, with gates guarded by day and night. Within these walls are found all the various offices of the government departments. Beyond them, and hid completely from view by the imposing towers of the audience halls and other buildings, lies the portion of the palace where dwells his majesty. Here is located the immense harem into which goes every pretty girl that appeals to his majesty's fancy, or who is sent to him as a present by some aspiring subject.

The day I first visited the palace was evidently an "off day." Sleepy guards lounged around the gates, sitting either on empty coal-oil tins or on chairs which had to be placed against the wall for support. Their long trousers and bare, dusty feet gave them an exceedingly slovenly look. We were allowed to enter, after we had given a tip to the guard, and for several hours roamed around in the outer buildings that are nearly always accessible to

* *People and Politics of the Far East*, Norman, p. 412.

sightseers. We were told by our cicerone, an old foreign resident of Bangkok, that whenever some visitor of note was expected, or the day was a festive one, then presto! The guards became erect and smart looking, and everywhere would appear a hurry and skurry of coolies, which in a twinkling would transform the place into a fairyland of outward splendor and beauty, rich in color, imposing in architectural effect, and dazzling in the gold and jewels of princes and nobles. But we had to content ourselves with Siamese royalty in repose, which allows dust to accumulate, cobwebs to form, lamps to burn into the day hours, until they go out for lack of oil, and a general look of disorder and stagnation to appear on every side.

We first wandered into that most noted of all Siamese shrines, *Wat Pra Kian*, wherein is found the Emerald Idol. This *wat* is also famous as being the king's own place of worship, and because it is here that occur the great Siamese ceremonies of state, such as drinking the water and taking the oath of allegiance. The *wat* courtyard is paved with slabs of white stone and marble, and from about the center of it rises a *prachadee*, or pagoda, which towers high above all surrounding shrines and sacred buildings, a mass of resplendent gold. From the archway where we entered it was gloriously beautiful and graceful, the many white spires around and the brilliant-tiled roofs forming a picturesque setting. But as we neared I was disappointed that in detail the work was poor, and in places the gold tiles or slabs were broken and

nicked. In the crevices spiders were peacefully spinning. The *wat* proper, or *wihara*, is to one side of the court, and is imposing in architectural effect. The windows and doors are deeply set and appear heavy as they swing slowly upon their gilded hinges. The material appears to be ebony, but is in fact black lacquer, exquisitely traced in mother-of-pearl. At the far end of the oblong building, arose the various gold idols of Buddha, arranged in a pyramid form. Above these idols, away up in the shadows of the roof, rested the idol which is claimed to be hewn from emerald. It dropped from heaven, so the story goes, in one of the Laos states, and was brought from there and placed in this royal temple. Its eyes are made of diamonds, and in the center of its forehead is a third diamond, at least this is the claim, but occidental eyes cannot vouch for its being true; and even the tourist's spyglass fails to reveal the glories attributed to the idol. About the base of the pyramid are to be seen the gold and silver trees which used to be sent down by the old Laos kings as tribute; also exquisite wax-work, made by the ladies of the palace. Back of the altar there were several museum cases filled with jewels, the majority poorly cut and so covered with dust that we could not discern their beauty. The walls and ceiling were painted in a bold manner, with scenes from the life of Buddha and Hindu myths, and, as in all Siamese art, perspective was entirely lacking. The general effect, however, was rich. This *Wat Pra Kian* is situated so as to be easily accessible to the ladies of the royal harem, and it

is here that his majesty makes his offerings of flowers and waxen tapers and performs his daily devotions.

Next we went with feelings akin to awe to see the royal white elephants, of which we had heard and read so much. But, alas! to our utter amazement we found, instead of marble floors and ivory pedestals and gold trappings and handsome grooms, a stable which would really have shamed the mule of a down-South darkie. But our cicerone reminded us that this was not a gala nor sacred day. Had it been, we should have seen these most royal elephants dazzling in splendor and swaying their trunks graciously towards the multitudes of kneeling worshippers.

But it is not the purpose of this book to speak at length of Bangkok or we would never reach Laos-land. We must hasten northward; first, however, there are a few more words that must be said about this walled palace. Is it to be wondered at that the recently appointed cabinet has accomplished so little? and, excepting the office of Minister of the Interior, which is filled by his excellency, Prince Dăm-rōng, is but a paper cabinet? Is it to be wondered at that his majesty, who was so full of promise, has disappointed, in many respects, his European and American friends by his failure to insist firmly upon progress and good government? Are these things to be wondered at when within the palace walls stand towering *wats* of Buddhism binding with unbroken chains the present to the past, and within the very center of these grounds,

where his majesty is known to spend the greater part of his time, is a harem, rich in beautiful young women, with halls and courts cooled by sparkling fountains, dazzling in silver and gold and gems, and fair with palms and flowers and silken couches, with ease and self-indulgence everywhere? Is it to be wondered at? No; and what has been accomplished is simply marvelous when balanced against such fearful odds.

Bangkok is some thirty miles from the coast as the river winds, but only about half that distance as the crow flies. It is situated upon the Me Nam, sometimes called Me Nam Chau Paya. As there is much contradiction as to the correctness of the name Me Nam, a special word of explanation will here be in place. The late king wrote for the Bangkok Calendar as follows:—

“The word Me Nam in Siamese is a generic name for river, and one of the names of the Bangkok River. But as the Siamese call all rivers *Me Nam*, and the word is used by them in the same manner as ‘river’ in English and *Nudi* in Hindustani and Pali, it is wrong for Americans and some other nations to call the Bangkok simply ‘Me Nam,’ for it has a specific name, same as the Amazon, Ganges, and so forth. It is the custom of the Siamese to call the stream nearest to them *Me Nam*, and add the name of one of the principal towns or villages on its bank to it, as Me Nam Bangkok, Me Nam Kung, Me Nam Ta Chin, etc. The true name of the Bangkok River is Me Nam Chau Paya, *but it has become obsolete.*”

The last clause is significant, and the river is now so well known as Me Nam that usage must be accepted as authority. To the Siamese there gathers about this noble stream a sweet sacredness, for to them it is a life-giver, a life-sustainer of the land, being in reality, not in sentiment, to the country what the Nile is to Egypt and the Ganges to India.

If you come to Bangkok by way of Singapore or Shanghai or Hong Kong the first view is disappointing. It does not stir the heart with rapture as does Singapore with its exquisite setting of ever-green hills and its tranquil bay reflecting back the beauties of earth and sky; neither is the scene imposing, as is the river front of Shanghai; neither do you see an immense city reaching afar up upon the hills at the back as in Hong Kong, for Bangkok is built upon a dead level, and there is little to be seen from your steamer deck, save a towering *wat* spire here and there, and the dazzling towers of the Halls of Audience. The homes of the one-half million souls of Bangkok are found principally beneath a canopy of green trees, among which the palm and palmetto are conspicuous for their great height.

The river scene is as busy a one as can be found anywhere the world around. Upon the bosom of the wide stream can be seen every kind of a boat from the tiny cockle-shell canoe to the large steamers from Singapore and Hong Kong. There are steamers from England unloading iron, wrought and unwrought, machinery, cotton goods, hard-

ware, cutlery, and kerosene. There are other steamers loading with rice, teak, pepper, and cattle. Chinese junks, used much as transports for carrying down rice and hewn teak across the bar for the larger steamers, are conspicuous for their number as well as for their gesticulating crews; gondola-like boats, propelled by women or men, are coming and going on business or pleasure, and always with ease and grace; Chinese boats are bobbing about with their ever-present eyes looking comically out from the prow, for, according to Chinese belief, a boat "No have got eye; no can see; no can go." Women and children in dugouts are paddling fearlessly in the wake of steamers, trying to sell their load of fruit and sweetmeats; saucy, noisy steam launches are here, there, everywhere, tearing up and down the river like mad; and altogether the scene is as busy, as restless, as mottled, as industrious, as persistent, as is street life on down-town Broadway. Nor is all this bustle confined to the Me Nam, for the city is intersected by creeks and numberless canals, which are the real highways of the place. Every house has a boat of some kind, according to the financial standing of the owner, and so the canals are pulsing with life, especially during the hours of high water.*

This eastern Venice is built chiefly on the eastern bank of the Me Nam. Its main road runs for about six miles, the bridges over canals and creeks being high enough not to interfere with water traffic.

* The tide rises some six or seven feet.

There are also other good streets, especially about the palace walls. However, we must admit that they are due not to Siamese industry, but to the fact that for the last ten years his majesty has had many Europeans in his public works department. The *Bangkok Directory*, for 1897, contained some two hundred names of foreigners under Siamese employ, and the number is yearly increasing.

Along the full length of this main road runs an electric trolley line, whose cars are always crowded, and which annually turns into its shareholders a dividend of thirty-four per cent. I have never felt so much like a sardine in a box as when upon one of these cars, but the most annoying part of the ride is that the fare has to be paid in immense copper coins, which are heavy and cumbersome, and are really filthy to the touch. Or if you perchance give a small silver coin you will receive in change from the conductor a handful of the above-mentioned *pies*. This road was originally a horse-car line, and was changed in 1892 into an electric trolley, the fortunate concessionary being a Dane, M. de Richelieu by name. Immediately following the change the natives would not ride upon the cars, but in superstitious dread, born of an unscientific mind, they would hug the walls or fences as the cars whizzed by, muttering to themselves: "It is the devil's carriage; it is the devil's carriage!" But love of ease is the most evident characteristic of a Siamese, and so before many more suns had boiled down upon him as he trudged along, he yielded

fear to convenience, and thence became a constant patron of the trolley.

Since 1894 the palace has been illuminated by electricity, and lately a Siam Electricity Company has been formed, and is doing a good business, paying a semi-annual dividend of four per cent on ten thousand lamps, with a capacity for several thousand more. Telephones and other modern inventions prove that Bangkok is trying to follow the lead of western nations, while more than three thousand bicycles spinning about the city give evidence of the same. The king himself owns a wheel, and Prince Dăm-rōng is president of a club of several hundred members. Free public schools are found about the city, and in fact are established now in centers throughout the kingdom. In 1899 a royal decree was issued, making Sunday a legal holiday, so nominally all government business is suspended on that day.

These signs of progress give promise of great things for Siam. Yet the stranger is apt to attach too much importance to them. With all due appreciation of their worth, the fact remains that they are only upon the surface. The foundation remains as when the doors of Siam were closed to the world, for the mass of the population is untouched by them.

The palace, legations, and principal residences and business houses have their fronts upon the Me Nam, and also an entrance upon the main street in the rear. Our United States legation is pleasantly located, but an American notes with in-

jured pride that the grounds and building cannot compare with those of many of the European legations and consulates. The buildings of our Presbyterian Mission are centered about four different localities, two of them being upon the left river bank. The Press and Christian high school are on the east side, admirably situated.

The most unique feature of Bangkok is its house boats, real houses floating about, buoyed up on a raft of bamboo poles. Thousands of these floating houses are in Bangkok, and in many respects they represent the happiest phase of life among the plebeians. They are entirely safe, as their moorings hold them in place; and they are more healthful than the land houses, for the current bears away all refuse and makes better sanitation than is possible ashore. There is no need to feel concern for the children, as they no more fall into the water than do our American children walk into the fire. Usually there are three or four generations living in one house.

These house boats, or floating houses, line the banks of the river on both sides, leaving free only the landing places of residences or business houses. Up and down the banks they extend for many miles above Bangkok, rising and falling with the tides, in the rainy season making fast their moorings because of the strong downward current, and in the other season being content to lie stranded on the dry river bed if necessary, because of the narrow confines of the river. A very delightful feature of this floating-house life is the ease with which a family

can move. Many families pole their houses up to the rice plains during the planting and harvesting seasons, and during the other months spend their time in the city suburbs, converting the front room into a shop for selling their wares.

To illustrate more fully the water life of Bangkok, I will give an experience in the summer of 1895. We found to our dismay upon reaching the city that our boxes containing bedding, camp chair, camp table, dining outfit, tinned goods, and other things indispensable for the river trip before us, had been delayed and might arrive next week, next month, next year, or not at all. There was but one thing to do, buy more; for the Laos flotilla of boats had arrived, and all the party but my husband and myself were in readiness for the journey. Through the courtesy and kindness of Dr. T. H. Hayes a steam launch was put at our disposal, and we started forth immediately after breakfast to purchase a second supply of goods. Our little launch, as it tore along, left behind a swell that tossed the children in their cockle-shell canoes, as well as the old people in theirs, making the former scream with delight and the latter shower upon us curses and uncomplimentary ejaculations. We spent the day shopping, and bought everything needed from a can opener and matches up to a mosquito netting, and yet we went everywhere in our launch, alighting only at the landings of the larger stores. At the small stores, which were usually floating, the launch would pull up alongside; and immediately before us, spread out on the

floor and shelves, could be seen the whole stock of goods and ware. The experience would have been very delightful had there been one price upon the goods, but true to oriental business principles,—or lack of principles—the first named price we knew to be exorbitant, and served only as an introduction to a long series of offers by the salesman, to which must be lent a deaf ear until a reasonable sum is reached, reasonable for Bangkok, I should add.

It is to trade that Bangkok owes its existence and Siam its place among the nations. Yet, strange to say, the Siamese are not the traders, but pushing, energetic foreigners from the West and Chinese from the Celestial empire. If there be one word a Siamese detests above another it is "routine." He can hustle when preparing for some festivity, and make a great show of energy and enterprise, but when the occasion is passed, he must lie down in the shade and recuperate. If he wishes to engage in any undertaking of whatsoever nature it may be, he must first discover by means of soothsayers or astrologers which will be the auspicious day. All this takes time and causes delay, which exasperates an occidental beyond endurance. A Siamese merchant must never be tied to his business, but be free to close his shop when he pleases, and go to a *merit*-making season at some *wat* for a day, a week, or more, as he likes. But there is another reason stronger than either of these which has made it difficult for Siamese to become traders, namely, the laws of *corvée*, or a system of forced

labor from one to three months of each year. This, when combined with the indulgence of Mother Nature, who gives to her children of this land a living for the mere asking, makes it difficult, probably impossible, for Siam to become a business nation. The conditions must first be changed. Of this *corvée* and serfdom we will speak fully in a following chapter.

CHAPTER III

SIX WEEKS IN A SIX-BY-SEVEN

THERE is but one way of reaching the land of the Laos, unless, indeed, you may wish to go to Burma and take the tedious and expensive overland trip either by pony or elephant. If you follow in the footsteps of those who have gone before, you will go to Bangkok and there take passage in one of the unique Laos boats that come down to trade each year on the high water.

The upper reaches of the river are exceedingly dangerous, as many rapids and narrow rocky gorges are found in the mountain-passes. These Laos boats are built with an eye to those places, and can ascend them with comparative safety when manned by their skilled Laos crews. It is interesting to know that the original model for these boats was a fish. The Laos, wishing a boat larger than their canoes and dugouts, studied what charts they had in their school of nature, and decided that a fish should be their model. They certainly succeeded in evolving a boat admirably suited for their needs, and graceful as a swan when seen moving upon the bosom of a broad stream. The Laos consider these boats the most perfect of their architectural creations, and especially do they esteem the uplifted tail, both for its grace and imposing appearance.

The tiny cabin in the rear is usually about eight by nine feet, and occupies all the space in these boats available for a cabin. No matter how much one may wish to travel in ease and comfort, no matter how much money he may have at his disposal, he must adopt this primitive, simple mode of travel if Laos-land be his destination. In but one way can he make the trip more suited to his taste, and that is in the matter of time. By hiring a steam launch to tow the boat to Pak Nam Po and from there on using a double set of polemen, the journey can be cut in time to some eighteen or twenty days. But this is costly.

The distance is some five hundred miles in an air line, six hundred or seven hundred as the river goes, and by ordinary travel it will take from five to seven weeks to cover it, according to the stage of the water. The trip downstream is made in from ten to twenty days, as the boat is borne along swiftly by the strong current, aided by the oars of the boatmen. In ascending, better time is made by poling instead of using oars. The poling is done with bamboo poles, about ten or twelve feet in length, one end of which is spiked with iron. One by one the men ascend the elevated "nose" at the bow, with quick eye select the best place for their pole, and with a dextrous movement thrust the spiked end upon it. Both palms are then folded upon the end of the pole, and the body swung around upon it, with the hands resting against one of their shoulders. All the strength and weight of the body is thus playing upon the pole, and



A LAOS PASSENGER BOAT.

down the front of the boat comes the tramp, tramp, of the bare feet of the poleman. When he reaches the cabin, he pulls out his pole, and swinging it in both hands high above the heads of the other polemen bent at their task, he marches up again to the front. It takes a strong muscle, well-developed body, endurance, and skill, to pole one of these Laos boats. To the traveler in the cabin there is always pleasure and interest in watching the boatmen at their work, and, too, there is the spice of excitement, for the unpracticed eye cannot decide upon the best place for the pole to be thrust. Even a skillful poleman is often deceived, and throws his pole upon a limb or stump too frail. Inevitably he plunges into the stream amid the pleasant taunts of his fellows, but before the boat has time to pass him, he is back again safe, with his pole, and none the worse for his unasked-for ducking. If a pole will not pull out when jerked, the owner seldom lets go his grasp, but springs into the water, dislodges the pole, and with a few long, swinging strokes is back again to the boat.

A glance at the illustration will aid in understanding the economy of the boat, which is interesting, for not an inch of space is lost to use. The floor is made of small pieces of movable plank, which can be raised and goods stored below. Thus an ordinary boat with passengers is able to carry about two tons, measured forty cubic feet to a ton. Such a boat needs a crew of five men, four polemen and a captain. The captain stands in the cabin to the rear, just under the flag pole. He

holds firmly in his hands the long, blade-like rudder, which passes out a hole in the rear of the cabin, at the left-hand corner. The captain's eye is before him, watching the currents of the stream steering the boat ever into water of just the right depth, avoiding rocks and snags and shoals, and giving orders with as much authority as the commander of one of our trans-Atlantic liners. And in proportion there is as much need for it. One false move and the boat is swamped, goods lost, and passengers probably drowned. But so skillful are these captains that an accident seldom occurs, though the way is not without its grave dangers, especially among the rapids and within the limits of Bangkok's busy water life. The crew sleep at night upon the floor of the boat in front of the low freight cabin, unless, indeed, they are so fortunate as to have been beside a dry bank or sandbar when the sun sank. Then the softer ground is their bed. If it rains, the extra pieces on top of the freight cabin are pulled forward.

The cooking is done on a box filled with earth, on which are placed stones to support the kettle, saucepan, and skillet. This primitive stove is placed just before the freight cabin, and the cook must see to it that he does not get in the way of the busy crew. When not squatting before his stove box, he is usually found lounging in the doorway of the freight cabin. Along each side of the freight cabin, just above the gunwales, runs a wide board which forms a passage-way between the passenger cabin and the front of the boat. The boatmen are

clad simply in a loin cloth; and a small piece of cloth tied loosely around the neck serves to wipe the face when dripping with either perspiration or with water got by a ducking. Their tattooed legs give the impression of trousers to the knee. There is nothing immodest in being thus scantily arrayed, for neither custom nor climate demand clothes for "every day."

The front of the passenger cabin is open and has no means of being closed save by the dropping of a cloth curtain from the top. This falls immediately behind the captain and shuts the passenger into a space of some six by seven or eight by nine feet. This curtain is dropped at night and the bottom tucked beneath the foot of the bedding. In the morning the crew are stirring with the first glow of dawn, and the passenger is awakened by the creaking of the rudder as it plays in the hole. When dressed, the curtain is raised and the long day begun, a day in which there is no privacy: for we are in Siam where privacy is unknown.

But though the trip is a long one and a strange, trying one in many respects, it need not be an unpleasant experience, for if one has good books, a palm-leaf fan, a mosquito bar, open eyes, alert mind, warm heart, love of fun, a good cook, and an agreeable traveling companion—for, know ye, that the luxury of a cabin all to one's self is all but unheard of on these waters—the journey will be rich in adventure and full of the charms of a tropical land and a strange people.

In the fall of 1895 I made the trip for the first

time, and kept a full journal, from which I will quote in part, as it will give a better conception of the pleasures and trials of such a journey than could otherwise be given. The personal touches will not be wholly eliminated from it, as later on in this book a history of the Laos Mission will be given, and these few glimpses of the men and women who have helped to make that history, will draw the personages nearer to the reader and add understanding to the history.

There was a large party of us, sixteen in all, counting the children. Four of us were new missionaries, namely, Miss Hattie E. Ghormley, the Rev. William Harris, the Rev. L. W. Curtis, and Mrs. Curtis. The others had been to America on furlough and were returning to their beloved work and people. These were Dr. and Mrs. James McKean and two children, the Rev. and Mrs. W. C. Dodd, and the Rev. and Mrs. D. G. Collins and four children.

October 17th, 1895.—We left Bangkok yesterday at 3 o'clock. Our leaving caused quite a bustle and excitement at the Wǎng Lǎng Compound where we had been so graciously entertained, for our party was large, and there are always many things to be done at the last minute. Finally good-bys were said, and we were all in our boats. One by one they pulled out from the landing, until the whole flotilla of eleven were moving upstream. There were six house boats and five freight boats. From each of the house boats floated our dear national colors, and never before had the Stars and

Stripes seemed more beautiful to me. I felt the force of what they stand for when I noted how the many Chinese junks and various crafts made way for us instead of annoying by blocking our way as they did the freight boats. In Bangkok I had heard the senior members of our party regretting that there was a scarcity of flags, and I now understood why. We made slow headway, for the river was full of boats and craft of all kinds, and our men had to row. Pulling these heavy boats against the current is difficult and tedious work. So busy were we watching the ever-changing river panorama, that we were surprised when our boat pulled up at a *wat* ground and we saw that the sun was setting. In a few minutes evening had

“... let her sable curtain down,
And pinned it with a star,”

and darkness settled, shutting out the view. But it could not drown the jargon of sounds, the barking of dogs, snarls of pariah curs, sharp voices of old men and women, the merry laugh of children mingled with the cries of others, the scream of steam launches, the wierd chant of monks at their orisons, and the near-by clashing of *wat* drums and cymbals, as though striving to drown all the discordant noises around; all these and other sounds came rolling into our little cabin, driving away sleep until away past midnight.

Our boats had pulled up side by side so that we could communicate with each other. As soon as we stopped, our cook, Müan, came in to the

cabin and by signs and meaningless words, announced that supper was ready. I shook out the little camp table, laid the cloth, and he brought in the repast, simple, indeed, but passing wonderful to us, when we knew the stove and kitchen he had at his disposal. When we had finished our supper and the table was cleared, we talked a while with our seniors, and it was decided not to hold evening worship with our crews until the noisy and dangerous city and suburbs were passed. We were told to go to bed early as we must be up with the sun.

And what a bed it was! No bed at all, until made. We first folded up chairs and tables and stowed them away to our side. Next our thin cotton mattresses, called *salis*, were pulled out from the low freight cabin and spread upon the floor. They completely covered the floor, for our cabin is by actual measurement only six by seven feet. We have the smallest house boat of the flotilla, as we go to Lakawn, and the river leading there is shallower than the one to Chieng Mai. After making the bed, we hung the mosquito net, and then came the almost impossible feat of getting under it without letting in a score or more of these sly, persistent mosquitoes. That accomplished, we had to take our first lesson of undressing in bed. Our clothes were folded and laid behind the pillows. Toward morning, a noisy thunderstorm arose,—this is the fag end of the rainy season—and our boat cover leaked in places. There was not much chance to get away from the drip. The worst leak was at the foot of the bed. W— put the wash

basin there to catch the water. The plan worked admirably until after the storm had passed over and we had dropped asleep, and in turning he knocked the forgotten basin over upon me, making the second state worse than the first. To-day I have had the cover hanging out of the window drying.

Afternoon.—The bedding is dry and is stowed away for the night. The day is cloudy, and so is fairly pleasant. Have suffered very little with the heat. We are tied up to a bank, as the men are taking their afternoon rest. This is a gala day with the Siamese. It is one of the days of the great *Tot Katin* holidays and the king has gone up the river to worship at one of the *wats*.

The royal barge was dazzling in its beauty as it passed us. A wealth of sunshine was flooding down at that time, and the gilded oars of the seventy oarsmen, clad in livery of brilliant red, were resplendent as they rose and fell in perfect unison. I have often read of this royal barge, and am delighted that I had so near a view. It appeared to be about one hundred and fifty feet in length and six or eight feet wide. Fore and aft, the barge gradually narrowed and tapered upwards above the water level some ten or twelve feet. Hanging from the stem and stern were two large white tassels which looked soft like silk* and also a golden banner, the inscription of which could not be seen. The uplifted bow was designed after

*I afterwards learned that they were made from the hair of the Cashmere goat.

a monster dragon of some sort, and the stern was his raised tail. The whole boat was richly carved and so gilded as to represent scales which were inlaid with gems and stones. These shone rich and rare in the sunlight.

About amidship was stretched a canopy of cloth of gold, beneath which was a throne, and seated upon it was his majesty the king. We had only a partial view of him, as rich curtains hung at the sides and partly concealed him. There were several persons with the king, but what was their rank or station we could not tell. This peep at royalty is surely very gratifying after our disappointment a few days ago in the palace.

Preceding the royal barge were several guard boats, about a dozen, I think, each built on the same general plan as the royal barge, but not so large nor so richly ornamented. They also dipped their oars in perfect unison, but I noted on each boat a man standing amidship with a baton in hand, beating time by dropping it perpendicularly upon the deck. Following the royal barge were what appeared to be the private barges of nobles and princes. The procession gradually diminished in splendor until a lot of small boats brought up the rear, very much as the ever-present crowd of small boys does in America.

While in Bangkok we were told that when in 1891 the Czarowitz—now Czar—of Russia visited Bangkok, he was met at the mouth of the Me Nam by these royal barges of the king, and was rowed up to the palace in them. He certainly must have

been impressed with the oriental magnificence of Siamese royalty—when it has its face washed and hair combed.

October 18th.—No rain last night, I am glad to say. We had fresh fish for breakfast that Müan bought from a market boat that came alongside. We are now away from the city, and so our boatmen pole. There can surely be no more interesting mode of locomotion than this poling. The old Greeks would have gloried in it, for it brings into play all the muscles of the body and develops forms of beauty and symmetry.

October 19th.—It has been extremely hot to-day. We have done little but fan. At noon we stopped in the sun for dinner, as there was no shade upon the rice plain we were crossing. It became so hot that our crew threw water upon the roof of our cabin, which cooled it off and for a while we were more comfortable.

Monday, October 21st.—The day is still fresh and cool, for the sun is not more than an hour high. We stopped Saturday night at an old *wat* ground and found it to be a delightful place to spend the Sabbath. The grove was large and the ground covered with grass. The place seemed to be no longer in use, as no monks nor cloisters were to be seen. Besides the crumbling *wat* there was a large, open building, more like our American pavilions than anything else, and which is called here a *sala*, or rest house, built by *merit* makers for the use of the general public. Over in one corner were three dust-covered idols. It was in this *sala*

that we held services, the first one just after breakfast, before the heat of the day; the second in the cool of the afternoon, and the third in the evening. Nearly all the boat crews attended. Each man had donned either a gauze vest or a white jacket, and as they sat Turk-fashion on mats spread upon the floor, they made an interesting picture. Many of the men are Christians, and nearly all read, so the responsive part of the services was repeated by many voices. Mr. Dodd preached the morning sermon, and I never before saw an audience give better attention to a speaker. The services were all in the Laos tongue, so that we new arrivals could not understand, but the hymn tunes were familiar, and I enjoyed playing them on Mrs. Collins's baby organ, and thinking the familiar words.

After the benediction of the morning service, we had a little song service in English. One of the songs was "Jesus Shall Reign Where'er the Sun." It had new meaning as we sang it for the first time in the presence of gods of stone, with natives around who had already bowed the knee to him and acknowledged him Lord of lords.

The afternoon service was informal and consisted chiefly of explanations of large picture charts. This drew a larger crowd from the village than the morning service had done. The evening service was conducted by one of the Christian natives, and took the form of a prayer meeting.

Monday Afternoon.—A short time after writing the above, Mr. Collins, whose boat was following ours, signaled us to stop. We did so, and soon all

the boats of our flotilla were brought together by signals and calls. Then the word went around that thieves had been at work during the night, as Mr. Collins's gun was missing. We all began to search at once to see if we, too, had been robbed. It was discovered that Mr. Dodd had lost his purse and camera, Mr. Harris a lamp and gun, Miss Ghormley a few pieces of clothing, and Mr. Collins his gun, two satchels of clothing and a Hitchcock lamp. Two boats, Dr. McKean's and ours, had not been touched. We decided to drop back to our Sunday stopping place, and upon reaching it, Mr. Dodd, Mr. Collins, and Mr. Harris at once started off to find the chief of the village. He referred them to the *kwen* of the province as the proper authority, but as he is at a distant village attending a wedding festivity, they sent messengers with our passports for him.

October 22d.—The *kwen* arrived a little after dark and W— and I joined the others ashore to hear the investigation. It was certainly a strange-looking hall of justice and a unique procedure. On one of the limbs of a wide-spreading Po tree hung a lantern. Beneath it on the ground burned a lamp. The lamp was the center of many concentric circles of people. The most conspicuous personages of the assemblage were Mr. Dodd and the *kwen*, who sat upon chairs in the inner circle. Around to Mr. Dodd's right our chairs were arranged, and from the *kwen's* left ran rows of natives seated upon the ground in crosslegged fashion. The *kwen* was a fine-looking Siamese, with a dig-

nity of bearing and ease of manner which formed a marked contrast with many of the rude natives around him. He was dressed in a plaid trouser-arrangement cloth, and a white jacket. His two attendants also wore jackets, and sat on the ground at his feet. Immediately to the left of the *kwen* sat, or rather crouched, the principal witness, a leper who lives on the *wat* ground and cares for it. I was shocked at sight of the creature so near, but Mrs. Collins whispered to me that there was practically no danger from this form of leprosy. He had an uncanny look, and the gleam in his eye was at once pathetic and desperate. His fingers were all gone and also much of his feet, so that he could no longer walk, but crawled as a child. I did not understand the proceedings, but I have learned since that our boat captains thought that the leper knew the names of the thieves, as he was seen talking late Sunday afternoon with some very sly-looking young men. Afterwards the young men came down to Mr. Collins's boat, and asked to buy books, though all the time they were using their eyes looking about the cabin. When told that this was the Sabbath day they seemed reluctant to go, even after having received some books of Scripture as a gift. The leper was very much excited and tangled himself up in his testimony, for at times all our crew would cry out aloud in protest at some statement of his, and they would jabber like angry monkeys until either Mr. Dodd or the *kwen* spoke, when they would become quiet, respectful, and attentive again.

The *kwen* wrote down the evidence, and said that he would return "to-morrow," which is to-day, and hoped to report that our goods were found. But nothing has been heard from him as yet. The men went gunning this afternoon, and we ladies sat beneath the trees and read, sewed, wrote, or played games with the children. But it was intensely hot, as a dead calm reigned. I tried a game of crokinole with Mrs. Dodd, Miss Ghormley, and Mrs. McKean, but it was too hot to enjoy the game.

Our crew have found an old *wat* drum and they are having a sword dance, much to their enjoyment, as well as ours. Two of the men are especially skilled as dancers, and why they do not cut each other with their swords is a mystery to us newcomers. They flourish them around each other in an alarming way. If some of our struggling sculptors in New York or Paris could reproduce these perfect physiques, as they are poised in the dance figures, their fame would be secured.

October 23d.—We are on our way again. The *kwen's* mission was unsuccessful.

Siamese are skilled in the art of rowing and paddling a boat, so much so that they can come up to a house boat at night, cut the cords that fasten the window shutters, reach in their hands and get what is within reach, close the shutter and push off into the darkness. It is not surprising that none of our party were awakened by the thieves, with our American ears as sentinels, but these Laos, children of Nature that they are, know the

art of sleeping soundly and yet keeping open a "weather" ear; yet not one of our crew was aroused, which seems to prove that these thieves were exceptionally deft in their trade.

October 26th.—We are still following the canals, to escape the swell of launches and boats. Houses are now beginning to be grouped in villages along the bank instead of being in continuous rows, as they were for many days after leaving Bangkok. We see buffaloes all the time. They lie in the water with only their noses out, reminding one of the alligators of our southern swamps. An immense herd has just been driven down to the river by some children, and they are now bathing. The boys and girls perch upon their backs, as they lie under the water, and play with them as does my brother with his dogs.

We have to drink the river water now, as our rain water we brought from Bangkok is all gone. Our cook allows the water to settle and then boils it vigorously in the kettle, from which he strains it into porous clay bottles, where it cools nicely. We then drink it, trying to forget that it ever had any connection with the muddy stream beneath us.

We are adding words to our vocabulary, and are now able to understand many of the things our captain tells us, probably, though, more from his facial expression and signs than from words. W—and I study every day, and there is no need to deny that the language is difficult. It seems to be built upon tones, the same combination of sounds meaning different things according to the tone given it.

To illustrate, *ma* means "to come," when the tone is straightforward; when rising, it means "dog"; and when emphatic, it becomes "horse." The ear has to be as alert as the mind, if one would conquer this language.

There is a fine breeze blowing to-day. We are gradually leaving the low swamps behind, and now our morning and afternoon stops are sometimes made beside banks, so that we can go ashore and stretch ourselves while the boatmen are resting. Mrs. Dodd was crossing over to Mrs. McKean's boat this morning to chat with her awhile, and fell in the water. No harm done, save a slight wetting.

Monday, 28th.—We spent yesterday at a very poor place, for there was little shade, and we suffered with the heat. The morning service was the most novel one that I ever attended. There was no *sala*, and only a tiny thatched shed by the roadside was available. Beneath this, we placed our chairs, and the natives spread mats under the banana trees to the front. The houses near by were all perched up on poles, some six or seven feet from the ground, which seems to be the approved Siamese method. To reach them, one must climb up a ladder-like stairway. Mr. Collins conducted the service. The opening hymns drew quite a crowd so that when Mr. Collins arose to announce his text, more than half of his audience were listening to gospel truths for the first time. We all felt the impressiveness of the hour, and even the irreverent Siamese were subdued for a few minutes. But hardly had Mr. Collins begun his sermon

when a noisy mother hen, with a large brood of young chicks, came clucking down the middle of the road and stopped to scratch just at Mr. Collins' feet, much to the merriment of a group of children near by. They laughed outright and made remarks which drowned Mr. Collins' voice, and so distracted the audience that he had to reprove the children, who quieted down for awhile. In less than five minutes, and for some unaccountable reason, the dogs of the neighborhood set up a howl. At once the strangers in our midst began to shower down upon them lumps of clay and such things within reach, emphasized with threats and ejaculations which, from the tone, I judged anything but complimentary. Of course, the sermon was interrupted, but Mr. Collins waited patiently until a state of semi-quiet again prevailed. The sermon proceeded, and all, even the children, were giving excellent attention, when a woman appeared on the outskirts of the crowd, with two children. Some one sitting near the front called out to her in a loud voice to come, sit down, and listen to what this teacher was telling. She did so, and the sermon again proceeded. By this time old King Sol had crept up quite a bit in the heavens, and was beaming down over the banana groves upon the front row. It took only a few minutes for him to drive the men and women to the rear. Instead of retiring quietly, they deemed it necessary to make explanation as to why they did so. When they were reseated, the sermon proceeded. But not for long, as a man came up the bank from his canoe,

with paddle in hand, and was hailed by some half dozen men in the audience. They must have told him to come and listen, for he did so, and the sermon proceeded, and for some minutes, too. Mr. Collins was evidently making the best of his time, and perfect quiet reigned. It was broken, though, by an old woman who got into a coughing fit and lost her chew of betel. This amused a group of children, who giggled, and then scampered away toward the house, and climbed up the ladder like monkeys. The sermon then again proceeded, and was soon brought to a close. I inquired afterwards as to whether this sermon was a typical one or not; and have been told that it is usual for Siam, but that among the Laos, a missionary has a more respectful audience. Though the seed-sowing was so unsatisfactory, we pray that it may bring forth fruit.

We entered the river this morning, just after breakfast, and are now going into another canal. There are hills about us to-day, and how beautiful they are! The mountains around the old capital city of Ayuthia have been pointed out to us in the distance to the east. This scenery is restful after so many days of dead level.

Afternoon.—We stopped for our afternoon's rest at the foot of a steep mountain, which rose almost alone from the plain about it. A fourth of the way up was located a *wat*, the best-kept *wat* I have yet seen. A long series of brick steps led from the bank to the *wat*. Here we found a large number of novitiates and other boys at their les-

sons, studying out loud at the top of their voices in the approved manner of Siamese. In the *wat* were people worshiping. We were told that at the very top of the mountain was a deserted *wat*, and that we would be free to take away as curios any old relics that we might find there. The ascent looked forbidding, but we thought of the likelihood of rare curios, and so Mr. Dodd, Mr. Harris, W—, and I left the others and started up the steep, rocky, overgrown patch. It was stiff, hard climbing, but the goal was finally reached, and we stood upon the old ruins, which had crumbled to the ground and lay moss-covered and vine-draped, not even a shadow of the glory that once existed. We found not a single thing that was worth picking up or carrying away. We all seated ourselves upon the fallen wall to rest, and to let the peaceful beauty of the place sink into our souls, and to give play to the thoughts which the scene aroused. Thoughts so different from those stirred by ruins like those of old Melrose! For here we were witnessing the efforts of the children of men of past generations as they reached up from the darkness which enveloped them toward "the unknown God." In ignorance and in superstition were their children now worshiping, still believing that the "Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device." And I remembered how it is written of that thrilling scene on Mars' Hill, that "some mocked: and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter, while others clave unto Paul and believed." And I

thought that though the times change, still the same problems of good and evil, choice between God and mammon, exist as of old, for daily now do I see that event on Mars' Hill repeated, and—but from below came softly, sweetly, the full, mellow notes of our boat gong. Our captains were impatient to be moving. We all sprang to our feet and pushed our way through the brush toward the pathway. Suddenly there burst upon us a vision of the wide stretch of country before us, reaching afar off into the distance until lost in the haze of the horizon. Flowing across the land, with a broad, majestic sweep, shining like silver in the slanting rays of the afternoon sun, was the Me Nam, "Mother of Waters." It looked as though she were reluctant to leave her beloved offspring, Siam, whom she nourished and cherished, for instead of going straight for the sea, she wound in and out, making bends and curves, and here and there turning round about as though determined to seek again the far north. She seemed lovingly to caress the villages clustered about her banks, and smiled upon their beauty, their palm trees, and fruit groves.

We were very quiet during our descent. The way was precipitous and dangerous, and we each had our own thoughts.

"... And God's own profound

Was above me, and round me the mountains, and under,
the sea,

And within me my heart to bear witness what was and
shall be."

Upon reaching the boats we were mute to reproaches for staying so long and coming back trophyless. We each felt that we returned loaded with rare and rich gems.

The sun is now sinking. What a grand spectacle it must be from that mountain top! The river is turned into gold, for the sunset glow is saffron. Here it is simply the same old muddy stream. I shall try and learn a practical lesson from this afternoon's experience, and when life seems ordinary and commonplace, will fly in spirit to some mountain top and see it turn into silver and gold.

October 29th.—Several of our party are sick with fever. Dr. McKean thinks that there are no serious cases. My ducks are all gone, and the chicken coop is nearly empty. We have got beyond the reach of market boats, and these villages we are passing have no markets whatever, and a villager will not sell his eggs nor chickens nor fruit for love nor money. I begin to look forward to Pak Nam Po where we hope to buy a fresh supply.

Wednesday, 30th.—Two weeks out from Bangkok to-day. Mountains are now piled up about us, not great towers of strength, but far too imposing to be called hills. At morning and night the shadows and lights upon them are beautiful. We have just had pointed out to us a Catholic church and school. We have passed several since nearing Pak Nam Po. The buildings are all large and fine looking, with crowds of school children about them, clad in cassocks. A gilded

cross looks down from the top of each building. I can readily see how the Siamese with their love of show and ceremony, would be attracted by the ritual and pomp of the Roman Catholic Church.

The days seem to be as hot now as formerly, but the nights are much cooler. During the heat of the day we often hang up wet sheets or towels to the side of our cabin, which reduces the temperature. A handkerchief wrung tightly from water, waved briskly in the air, and laid upon the head, is very refreshing, and enables us to study our language lessons with better results.

Yesterday we emptied a tin of milk, and W— wished to clean it out to use as a cover for our water bottle. So when we stopped for dinner and one of the crew threw water on the cabin to cool it, W— caught the first of the drip in the tin, and the water was hot enough to melt the milk from the grooves.

Thursday Morning.—Passed a restless night, as mosquitoes got in our net. They had to stay in, for we could not see to kill them, and outside they were buzzing in swarms so that we did not dare try to raise the net to strike a light. I find that in some places where we stop they are so much worse than in others. I have also discovered that this mosquito net of ours is good for other purposes than the keeping out of these pestilent little vampires. The agile centipede is our bitter enemy; and the more innocent, though more numerous cockroach, has been known to bite as I can attest;

lizards and mice have a way of making themselves at home in these boats, and altogether we lie down to more peaceful slumbers when beneath our netting.

CHAPTER IV

FROM PAK NAM PO TO RAHENG

THURSDAY, 31ST, *Pak Nam Po*.—We reached this place this morning. It is pleasantly situated at the conjunction of the Me Ping and the Me Nan rivers, which two form the Me Nam. The Me Nan is thought by many to be the main stream. It is navigable at all seasons, not being dependent upon the annual rains for its water supply. It is up this broad stream that the Nan and Pre missionaries go, though the latter have to make a short overland trip after leaving it at Ta It. Pak Nam Po is like Bangkok, on a very small scale, partly upon the water and partly upon land, though it cannot compare with the capital in picturesqueness. We have been lying here for several hours, as each family had to send to market to buy what could be found to eat. Our cook bought some very nice pumaloes, and bananas, oranges, and coconuts, also eggs and lard. He could get no chickens nor ducks. So I look ruefully at the almost empty coop perched up on top of the freight cabin and hope the few chickens therein will last to Raheng. It is not æsthetic, I know, this practical providing, with chicken coops forming part of every landscape and appearing more attractive to me when full, but it is really quite an unavoidable state of affairs. Muan took advantage of the long stop to scour the

floor of our cabin. He did it with the end of a cocoanut husk, and the result is entirely satisfactory. I notice that the husk lathered slightly like soap. Mrs. McKean says that all the natives scour this way, when they scour at all.

Afternoon.—We are again on our way, and so now “good-by” Me Nam, and gladly “good-by” steam launch and Chinese junks. The junks have a way of coming up in large companies to load with rice and fruit. They string themselves together and hire a steam launch to tow them. To me such a procession in a river bend or narrow pass is an unpleasant experience. Above Pak Nam Po, the river is so shifting in its current, and shallow, except at flood times, that launches and junks never venture into it. Our captains seem to be very glad to have passed Pak Nam Po. They say that when they pass Raheng then “pleasant truly” as all fear of Siamese and robbers will be a thing of the past.

Just in front of me are three boat houses. Children are sitting round on the gunwales with feet dangling in the water. One large girl is bathing, by pouring water over her body from a cocoanut dipper. There! If every one of them has not dropped into the water and now all are bobbing about like ducks! A woman is going up the bank with two water baskets hung from a bamboo pole, which is laid across her shoulder. I say “water basket,” for it seems to be a basket dammared with resin of some kind.

Friday.—One of the varieties of banana that I

have eaten is slightly acid, and when fried or roasted is delicate in flavor, being really delicious. It makes an excellent pie when mixed with tamarind. This is not a caprice of my palate, for W—and all of our party are with me in this decision.

The country is beautiful, hills and mountains about here and there, and the river banks rich in all shades of green, having for a border at the top the nodding silver and tan heads of grasses. The stream is wide, but the current is not very swift, and the men touch bottom with their poles in mid-stream. I am glad that we are now able to make stops at places other than villages. The constant sight of so much dirt and betel-chewing is oppressive. And the incessant chatting in high-pitched, harsh tones of the plebian Siamese has been a severe strain upon our nerves. Our captain has a way of saying *barw moan*, "not pleasant," when we are in the midst of so much disturbance. The villages are yet every mite as unpleasant, but they are fewer, and water life is reduced to a minimum.

Our morning stop was on the right bank at a village *wat*, which was the trimmest, best-kept *wat* I have seen, and the most pleasing in its setting of wide spreading trees and tall palms and palmettoes. Some one had made good *merit*, for the whole ground was freshly swept. From the *wat* came the sound of many voices chanting in regular intonations. We drew near, but found all the doors and windows closed. Usually these *wats* have an unclosed front or side, but this one could be tightly closed. A monk lounging near

by said that it would be perfectly admissible for us to peep in if we wished to. This we did. At first we could see nothing, as it was too dark, but gradually I noted that men, women, and children were seated in rows upon the floor and were bowing their heads in their folded hands until they touched the floor, before the staring image of Buddha in the rear. A few tapers burned at the foot of the altar and gave the only light in the room. An abbot sat close by and evidently was conducting the service. The monotone of the chanted service was very weird, and the dim room, the staring idol, the waxen tapers, all gave a somber, even spectral aspect to the whole. The children looked frightened, and I did not wonder that they should be so impressed. Without in the beautiful grove we saw the robes of a monk hanging upon one of the trees. So the order has recently lost one of their brethren in death.

Saturday, November 2d.—All the sick ones are better, excepting Mrs. Dodd, who is not yet able to sit up all day. She lies much of the time on a couch made on the floor at the rear of their cabin.

To-day a fine breeze is blowing. In the distance toward Raheng are mountains which look like palisades, and are as purple as are the Blue Ridge of my dear native State. Much of the mountain land that we pass through is of barren rock, the strata of which rises perpendicularly in immense columns. The country grows more and more beautiful, the mosquitoes less troublesome, and the days cooler.

Last night we stopped beside a wide-stretching sand bar. It gleamed white and enticing in the starlight, so all decided to have evening worship there instead of in our cabins. Of course, we newcomers cannot yet speak the vernacular, so always go with our crews to the cabin of some one of our seniors for the evening prayer service. We had last night what might be termed a union service, and after the closing hymn and prayer we all sat chatting for a while, enjoying the calm peace of a tropical night. The charm of the sky was indescribable. It was thickly studded with the very brightest of stars, which steadfastly refused to twinkle, but which won our hearts by their soft glow, a glory all their own, which is unknown to our home-land clime. How I have learned to love the liquid light of these southern stars! Before we came to our cabins, the men of our party had a brisk game of leapfrog. They looked like a crowd of college boys instead of dignified men. A bath or swim in the clear shallow water surrounding the sand bar now forms a part of our evening pleasures. The men have been plunging in all along, but we ladies have not until recently.

Monday Morning.—We spent a profitable and happy Sabbath, though both Mrs. Collins and Mrs. Dodd were confined to their cabins with fever. The river is rapidly falling and large portions of its bed are left bare and dry. These sand bars make ideal places for stopping at night. During the day they are so hot that the sand actually burns when touched.

Tuesday, 5th.—Every afternoon as the sun nears the horizon W— and I crawl out on top of our freight cabin and sit there until

“Light thickens; and the crow
Makes wing to the rooky wood”;

when the boats all tie up for the night and we come in to supper. The glow of sky and earth at sunset makes of earth a fairyland. Not rich and resplendent as are the sunsets at home, but soft and mellow, and wooing with tints of yellow and saffron and green, such bewitching hues, that one is reminded of a perfect spring time before the richer blooms of June have come.

Our boat crews evidently enjoy this river life. They are merry all day long, and I have yet to hear the first quarrel. Like children they seem to think only of the present hour, and unlike us they are not always reaching out for something beyond. *Plus ultra* is meaningless to them, not so much for being in the Latin tongue as for expressing a condition utterly beyond their comprehension. W— and I have noted with pleasure that this does not apply to our Christian converts. They love to lie flat on their backs reading and pondering over one of the gospels, or committing to memory the catechism, or reading some one of the several little books printed by the mission.

A Chinaman's boat from Chieng Mai has passed us. It stopped us, and the Chinaman delighted our hearts by delivering to us letters from the missionaries there. He also had a supply of good

things for the inner man that Mrs. McGilvary in thoughtful love had sent to the party. Eggs! how welcome! a jar of tamarind sauce for each family; cocoanuts, and a large cake! I did not know before how good cake could be.

The nights are cold and we sleep under blankets, though the thermometer has not gone below 56°. It must be our nearness to the water that causes us to feel the cold so keenly. One must needs pass restless nights bathed in stinging perspiration to realize the luxury of drawing up a light-weight blanket. By noon, though, the perspiration runs down our faces in little rills, if we exert ourselves ever so little.

At every stopping place our men cast their nets for fish. The small ones they chop up and put in the curry pot, and the large ones they split and sun-dry. The river fairly seems to teem with fish. I wonder how much I will have to unlearn about Buddhism and this people. They eat all the meat they can get, putting it into their curry pots, even being ravenous about pork, and many of the men are the staunchest of Buddhists, and have served terms in the *wats*.

Each crew does its own cooking. They steam rice once a day, usually in the early morning hour, before the first glow of dawn. After breakfast it is packed into little baskets and eaten cold the remainder of the day with hot curry.

Wednesday.—My heart has stood still twice to-day. First when we were passing through a line of bamboo sticks driven into the river bottom to

obstruct the downward passage of fish, and force them into traps. These sticks are usually pliable and bend as the boat pushes against them. We pass through many of them daily, but this time our boat caught on a stiff one, a veritable pole, pitching the boat over to one side. All our books and toilet articles on the shelf to the back of our cabin, came showering down upon our heads. I saw Tennyson's Poems and my darning gourd dive through the window, and I held tightly to the side to keep from following them. In a twinkling the men had the boat off the pole and we were trying to restore order, while Müan fussed and grumbled at his upset dinner, and lost saucepan. Both saucepan and soup had gone overboard. Alas! that soup contained my last tin of tomatoes!

The second fright occurred in the bend of the river, where the stream was swift and narrow, and the banks high, so that our crew could not see a raft of teak logs above. We met directly in the bend, and for a few seconds we thought that we were lost. Our captain shouted orders and swung to his rudder, and the polemen worked like Trojans. As the raft swept by, it missed us less than a foot.

Saturday, 9th.—We are nearing Raheng, and the villages on the river bank are nearer together, almost continuous. Our morning stop was beside a pleasant bank, so we all went ashore. Several of us wandered into the village. Beneath one of the houses a pretty Siamese girl was weaving cloth. As a child I have often watched weaving in the

poor homes about my father's plantation, but the looms could not compare in crudeness with this one. It is true that it had all the essentials of a good working hand loom, and that the cloth she was making was really beautiful, smooth, and even in design. The girl was deft in throwing the shuttle and in reversing the healds by means of treadles. She made a pretty picture as she sat there upon her three-legged stool, apparently all intent upon her work, yet watching us from beneath her long dark lashes, and pleased, too, at our words of approval which she understood as though she had known English. There is one language that is common to all races and peoples.

In the house above lay a lad with his leg in a splint. A few days before it had been broken by a buffalo. Only a few days, but he was pitifully emaciated, the lines of suffering upon his face being deep. His mother asked Dr. McKean to come and look at the limb to see if he could do anything for the child. There was nothing he could do under all the existing complex circumstances, save to encourage the poor boy and speak a word of cheer to the mother. I noted that he left with them some booklets and one of the gospels with a word pointing to the Great Physician. The mother offered us her betel tray with the invitation to chew. Mrs. Dodd explained that it was not our custom and begged to be excused. The woman looked puzzled and asked: "Then pray what do you chew?" When told, "Nothing," she looked astounded and incredulous. She felt our clothes,

admired our white skins, and asked questions by the dozen. She explained that never before had she seen foreign ladies. When little Kate McKean, who is a winsome, fairy-like blonde, ran up to bid us come to the boats, the woman exclaimed that she must be a holy being of a heavenly race.

Monday, 11th.—Yesterday was the quietest Sabbath we have had, for we stopped at an island in mid stream. Dr. McKean conducted the Laos service, preaching upon the necessity of the new birth. It was a most impressive hour, and after the benediction by Mr. Dodd several of the heathen men of the crew remained to talk further, and they seem to be honest inquirers of the truth.

Afternoon.—We reached Raheng at noon. How beautifully located this city is! Built upon the east bank, it overlooks the broad stream and mountains beyond. These mountains are never the same, but all day long keep changing their hues and aspects as the clouds and shadows vary. I have seldom seen a more beautiful location for an inland city. Excepting the scenery there is little which is beautiful and interesting to be seen. The city is made up of native huts, crowded with people. The latter form a most interesting study, for the population here is about half and half Siamese and Laos. There are many very apparent differences between the two peoples for all that they are related and live under the same flag. I have not noted a single difference which is not in favor of the Laos, unless, indeed, it be tattooing. The Laos men tattoo their legs, and it seems to me

now to be a rude and barbarous custom. I must find out why they do it. The women look both graceful and modest in their skirts, which come to the ankle, and with their long, heavy hair coiled upon their shapely heads. The short hair and man-like dress of the Siamese women contrast harshly with it. The Siamese women are masculine in muscle, as well as appearance, for the many years spent in the idle monkhood seems to sap all virile qualities from the men. True, the women enjoy a considerable degree of freedom, very unlike most oriental countries, but they have to work so hard that I have felt very pitiful toward them. I have seen women plowing in the fields while in the house lay men smoking and lounging and chewing. This betel is chewed so constantly by men and women that their mouths become disfigured by its use. Except among the gentry and Christians of Bangkok, I have not seen a good-looking middle-aged Siamese. They are old, haggard, and cross-looking at thirty. Nature tries to set things right in each successive generation, for the children are pretty, bright-eyed, and attractive. They all run around perfectly nude, except for silver anklets or necklace.

Raheng is about a hundred miles, a little north of east of Maulmein. I cannot ascertain its population, but it must be very great. Up and down the river bank it runs for some ten miles, but in depth it is only a hundred or so yards. It is the great postal-service center, for mails from Maulmein and Bangkok are here distributed to go all over the

north country. The various British timber companies manned by foreigners, usually cultured and courteous Englishmen, have here large compounds for their headquarters. Many hundred elephants are employed by them to work timber in the adjacent forests. It is at Raheng that the teak logs, which are cut in forests in the north of the Laos provinces and floated down with the currents, are collected in rafts, and set to Bangkok. Each raft has several natives to steer it and guard it from robbers. Above Raheng there are no rafts, for the rapids would tear them to pieces. Besides being a center for timber men, there seems to be a good trade in stick-lac, gums for dammering, hides, tobacco, and such things, carried on by natives and Chinamen. If the country were opened up by a railroad it would bound forward and become one of the garden spots of the East. Much of the fertile land lies wholly untilled. The rice plains are worked only sufficiently to supply the local demand.

I was surprised to find that Indian rupees were more acceptable in the market than Siamese ticals. The Bombay Burmah Company kindly gave us rupees for our ticals, as from now on only rupees can be used in buying from natives. So here we are living under the flag of the King of Siam, and buying our food with good English rupees.

Tuesday.—One of our freight boats and Mr. Dodd's passenger boat were found to be leaking, so we had to lie over to-day and have them dammered. The day has passed pleasantly beneath the

trees of the Bombay Burmah Company's compound. Part of the time the shadows lay so that our chairs were beside the river path, which seems to be the principal highway. Not a person passed us without bowing his head and bending his knees almost to a crouch, even those with loads upon their shoulders. Both Siamese and Laos have great veneration for authority, and it is etiquette to never allow their heads to pass above the head of an equal or superior. They do this so easily and gracefully that it is a becoming custom.

I have enjoyed watching elephants work the long teak-tree trunks into rafts. I did not believe before all that I had heard of their sagacity. But it is every word true and more. I was amused by a baby elephant. He walked beside his mother with his little trunk around a log as was hers, apparently feeling that he was helping. He seemed to be full of mischief, and afforded merriment for the natives, as well as for us.

Wednesday.—Our boat dipped water last night, and how much damage is done we cannot tell, but we are now tied up to a sand bar, with the crew unloading our boxes. It will be over two weeks before we reach Lakawn, and if any of our goods are wet they will be ruined with mildew before then. It was with full hearts that we saw the Chieng Mai boats pull away and leave us, for we will not see them again, as we turn off into the Me Wäng, just above Raheng. W— and I will be alone now until we reach Lakawn. I am glad we like our captain so well and are on such friendly terms with our

crew. Our flotilla is now reduced to three boats, our own passenger boat and two freight boats containing goods for the Lakawn missionaries. The freight boats are like the passenger boats, only smaller, requiring three polemen and having no cabin at the rear.

Later.—Very little damage was done, excepting to my box of chemicals and paper for photographic work. W— thinks that I can get Mr. Dodd's supply, as his is useless without his camera. I have heard, "'Tis an ill wind that blows nobody any good!"

CHAPTER V

THE END OF THE JOURNEY

NOVEMBER 16TH. *On the Me Wäng.*—This stream is much smaller than the Me Ping, and is more tortuous in its course. Our evenings are wonderfully pleasant, as we can indulge in the luxury of sitting up awhile after dark, for the mosquitoes and flying insects trouble us but little now. Until recently they would swarm as soon as our lamp was lighted.

We have just passed a *wat*. A number of monks were on the bank shaving the heads of several boys who were entering the order. Since leaving Pak Nam Po we have not seen so many monks as we saw below that place. For the first two weeks they were to be seen everywhere at all times of the day, especially, though, in the early morning hours, when they would go forth from their *wats* in tiny boats from house to house, would hold out their bowls and receive into them several spoonfuls of rice from the women who had been watching and waiting for them. This is *merit* on the part of the woman, so the monk neither bows his head nor speaks a word of appreciation, for it is kindness on his part to allow a woman to make *merit* upon him.

Monday Morning.—We see elephants constantly. They go up and down the river, pushing stranded

logs into the stream again, and breaking jams. With their drivers perched upon their heads they make a picturesque scene, especially when heavy jungle growth forms the background. All day yesterday they worked about us. We had to observe our Sabbath in the midst of everyday life and occupations, as, indeed, have all of our Sabbaths been, excepting the one spent upon the island.

I had a touch of fever yesterday, and had to lie down the greater part of the day, but I was able to sit up through the morning service, which the Christians of our crew conducted. Many villagers gathered and remained long after service to talk of this, to them, new religion. The Christians seem to find their greatest joy in talking to their fellow-countrymen about the "Jesus religion." In the cool of the afternoon I felt better, as I was free from fever, so W— and I walked out into the village. It is somewhat like Raheng in being a mixture of the two peoples, but the Laos now predominate, and we noted many changes in ways and customs. The women were beating out rice from the paddy, but unlike the Siamese who use a hand mortar and pestle, they have a very convenient arrangement of mortar and long hammer-like pestle which can be worked with the foot. We passed a woman who was in the first stages of leprosy. She begged us for medicines to heal, but we were powerless to help. If this people were as eager to be rid of their spiritual sorrows and diseases as they are of their physical, it would not be long before the

whole land would be cleansed and healed by the touch of the Great Physician. *Fiat lux.*

Under a house near by was a loom, at which sat a Laos woman. Beside her a young girl was spinning, and within touch of her crouched an old woman seeding cotton by means of a tiny hand gin. It consisted chiefly of two rollers which were turned by a crank; these caught the lint and tore it from the seed, which was left behind. It looked very much like a crude clothes-wringer. On a scaffold in the sun, cotton was drying, and near by it was packed into large hampers for spinning. In the yard were dye pots and from a rattan rope hung many hanks of yarn newly dyed in bright orange, blue, purple, and brown. One of the girl's hands was horribly stained by the dye. The yard about the house was well kept, and a large fruit grove stood to one side. On the veranda were pots filled with flowers which were blooming beautifully. Upon the richly-loaded orange trees I saw ripe fruit, blooms, and buds. I asked if the buds would mature, and the woman said, yes, if the tree was watered during the dry season. I am glad to say that this industrious family were Laos, and that there were many such in the village.

Monday Evening.—We have passed a stupid day, as both W— and I are full of quinine. We both have fever now. One's physical condition surely has much to do with their impressions when traveling. I have never been especially attracted to the half-savage dogs of Siam, but have given them little thought one way or another. However, to-day

they have sprung into giants and have become legion, and whenever our boat touches the bank they come down to the water's edge and snarl, growl, bark, and fight. Such voices! Our captain assures us that we have seen unusually few to-day. The glare of the noonday sun, naked children and bare bodies of men, unkept streets and yards, the barnyards beneath houses, with the necessarily accompanying fumes, the incessant betel-chewing and smoking, the loathsome sight of lepers and women with immense goiters; men, women, and children all crouched in the sun, shivering with chills and fevers; the jargon of an unknown tongue, and eyes everywhere staring straight at me, as though I were a monkey in a cage, all these things depress and weigh upon me as though I should suffocate. W— says that he is affected in the same way by them. The sun is now setting. I had hoped we would stop in the woods, but we cannot escape the villages. I dread the night with the dogs. Last night, either dogs were barking or cocks crowing all night. A cock in our coop was as impudent as could be. I had Müan make him into soup for dinner.

Tuesday Afternoon.—Fever and quinine! Sun glare and dogs and eyes!

Thursday.—The mountains! Fever is gone! *Deo gratias.*

Tuesday.—What shall I say? Words fail me. I have not written in my journal for several days, as I have had no patience with my pen, and even now it seems cold and indifferent to my thoughts.

These noble mountains piled up so high are the natural and political boundary between Siam and Laos. The river narrows at the passes and tumbles downwards over rocks and boulders in a mad rush to meet the level below, where it widens out again and becomes passive. There were some thirty of these rapids, all of which thrills one with awe. At the smaller ones the men bent to their poles and by great strength and skill pushed the stubborn boat upward. At the larger ones, the crews of the three boats united and by the triple power the boat was got up. But at the largest and swiftest ones, we were asked to land and lighten the boats that much, while a long, strong rope was firmly tied to the bow of the boat, by means of which it was dragged up. This was hard, tedious, and slow work, and only one boat could go through at a time. The captain's skill is very manifest here, and the muscles of his body rise up like cords. One false turn of the rudder on his part and the boat is dashed to pieces. In some of the rapids we noticed that the pass between boulders hidden only a few inches beneath the water's surface was only sufficiently wide to admit the passage of the boats. When we were forced to land we enjoyed the climb up the mountain's side, and the walk in the unbroken forest around the rapids. We found few flowers, but the forest growth was heavy and luxuriant. We came across several snake skins. One measured eight feet. In keeping with the spirit of the mountain wilds, I wound this skin around the brim of my hat, letting it fall in streamers behind. Our

captain afterwards informed me that it was extremely "good luck" to find such a skin and wear it. Wild chickens of a small breed abound. Peacocks and parrots and other rich-plumaged birds are abundant. One bird, shaped like a swallow, only larger, is of a brilliant blue color, and skims the water like a gull. We have picked up some very beautiful shells, larger than one's hand, and lined exquisitely with mother-of-pearl.

We sleep under blankets, and the days are fresh and bracing. The mornings are really cold. We wrap ourselves snugly in coat and jacket, and I add my shawl. Often W— pulls out his steamer rug, too. We eat our hot breakfast and are still cold. A fire would be acceptable. Yet our polemen wear but their one garment. A few have donned a gauze shirt, but the first time they get it wet, off it must come. They say *nao, nao*, "cold, cold," but they do not appear as cold as we feel. They plunge into the stream the first thing in the morning, to warm themselves, as they express it, and the water is like ice to the touch. When we stop for rest they at once wrap a blanket about themselves.

Wednesday.—The mountains are now behind us, and the stream is becoming very low. Yesterday and to-day our crew spent much of their time in the water, pushing the boat off sand bars into the narrow channel. At times, there appears to be no channel. Our hearts are stirred with strange thoughts, as we realize that at last, after three months of constant travel, we are nearing our des-

tinuation, and that even now we are in Laos-land, and are among the people to whom we have consecrated our lives.

The river has already left much of its bed dry, and the natives have utilized it for garden spots, planting principally cucumbers and mustard. The soil must be exceedingly rich, judging from the luxuriant growth it brings forth with so little cultivation. Every morning and evening men and women water these gardens by using a scoop attached to the end of a bamboo pole about as long as a broom handle. They stand in the river and toss the water upon the beds. A man and woman are now wading across the river in front of our boat, and in the deepest place the water barely comes to the woman's waist.

How these people love the water! We see bathers all day long. The women come down to the water, step in, and before our very eyes, by a quick movement raise the skirt to the head, twirl it around so as to form a turban, and drop into the water. The thing is done so deftly and so quickly that the only impression received is a blurred vision. The little girls leave their skirts on the bank and skurry down like ducks.

If I could make a book of my journal I could probably tell half of the things I see and hear instead of the scattering few. But I must not continue to neglect speaking of reed-blowing. The reeds are in sets, and are made with holes like a flute and a mouthpiece similar to that of a flageolet. There are several sets among our crew, and on

moonlight evenings—since we have left the droves of mosquitoes—our men sit on the sand bars and blow them. The various sizes and lengths of the reeds govern the pitch, and when a sufficient number is used, the combination makes a curious reed organ, which is smooth and mellow and plaintive in sound, withal, exceeding pleasing, even if tinged with a sweet sadness. The range of the organ is limited and the musicians go over and over the same strains, apparently having few tunes. We have come to love this soft, tuneful music and are glad in the evening hour to see the men drawing from the freight cabin their reeds. The tranquil stars above, the calm night about us, and then, along the bank, “the dulcet measures float in many a liquid winding note.”

While in the rapids we came one morning to a standstill, as before us there arose forbiddingly a log jam, apparently containing hundreds of logs. W—looked at the captain inquiringly, who touched his ears and pointed toward the jungles with a nod. We listened, and softly came through the trees the soft tinkle of several brass bells. In a few minutes an elephant pushed through the unbroken jungle growth and was shortly followed by some four or five others. They all walked slowly and sedately toward the jam into the water, and some above and others below the jam, they began work. In less than twenty minutes by the watch, the jam was broken and the logs were floating downstream. It was to us wonderful to see with what ease an elephant would tighten his trunk

about a log and send it off swiftly downstream. They seemed to know exactly the right spot in the jam to weaken in order to break the general support. I was interested to see how skillful the elephants were in turning away floating logs, which threatened to crush them. The drivers on the elephants' heads gave few orders, as the huge beasts seem to understand perfectly.

Thursday Morning, November 29th. Thanksgiving Day.—We are nearing Lakawn. Our captain says we will be there this afternoon. How fitting that this is Thanksgiving day!

Last night we stopped at a sand bar beside a large and prosperous village, which our captain said, with evident pleasure, was Lampang Kang. We knew from him that he had acquaintances in the village, and that there were a few Christians there, but we were not prepared for the surprise that awaited us. After supper W— waded to the sand bar, as the water was so shallow our boats could not touch the bank, and two men carried me out in a chair. We always have prayers ashore when possible. I saw that there were strangers in the group, but that is the usual thing. Imagine my surprise when, before I was out of the chair, they pressed forward and, grasping my hands, exclaimed, "*Ah, Mě Kū, sabāi ka, sabāi ka?*" And in the moonlight I saw bright, earnest faces, with a look of welcome, that did my heart good. W— had stopped to speak to one of the men, but he then came up and we sat down to talk as best we could with them. The group consisted of two

grown men, one elderly woman, a middle-aged one, two young women, and a little girl. These were the first middle-aged women I had seen who had good, bright, happy faces. Among other things, they told us how glad they were to be the first to welcome us to the land of the Laos. They had feared that we might slip by in the daytime, when they were busy at work, without their seeing us. We found out their names and their relation one to another, and learned that Mr. Taylor often comes down to visit them, spending several days at a time teaching and preaching. The girls said, with pleased looks, that they had been to school in Lakawn to Miss Fleeson, and that she had taught them "many things." They also told us that on every Communion Sunday they walked up to Lakawn to church service. I glanced at the old woman, and she nodded, and said, "Yes, she went, too." She then asked me if I had known Mrs. Taylor when we were in the "Outside world" together. I had to say "No," and at a glance I saw that she thought that I had missed half of life. She repeated her name and said something which we could not understand, but the language of the face and eyes expressed love and admiration. All of the group nodded emphatically at her words, and signified hearty approval.

But the evening was slipping away and we were forced reluctantly to bring it to a close by having evening prayers. We saw with pleasure that several of the little group had brought their hymn books and Bibles along. We had a delightful

service, the women in their turn reading the Scripture lesson, and doing so as well as the men. After the closing hymn, one of the maidens pulled out a rough yellow booklet from her Bible, and with an air of triumph showed it to our captain. He cried out with joy and began excitedly to explain to us that it was a few proof sheets of the new Laos hymn book. How eagerly and joyfully we looked over those pages! As we glanced up, the dark eyes around us were fairly beaming with joy and pride. The longed-for hymn book was now to be a reality, and the old Siamese copies could be discarded. No more struggling now over Siamese characters in order to read hymns, but each person could have a book in his own tongue. No wonder we were all so happy and thankful. W— handed the sheets back to the women, asking them to sing. They at once complied, and sweetly rose the song, "I Need Thee Every Hour." Through the mist that gathered I could hardly see the faces about me, and thoughts crowded in, and before me came all the millions of souls in this land that never raise their voices to God in song or prayer, and do not grow old beautifully as do these Christians, and who have neither the hope nor the peace that is theirs; and the words as they fell had a deeper meaning than ever before, an added sweetness.

But we are nearing the city, and we must prepare to leave the boat. This little six-by-seven was very strange to us six weeks ago, but now it is as an old friend, and we step from it out into the unknown future.

CHAPTER VI

THE FACE OF LAOS-LAND

LAKAWN is situated geographically to the south of the center of the Siamo-Laos provinces, at the intersection of some of the great roads of the country. These roads are not worthy of the term as we know the name, for in the main they are but footpaths, made by the constant passing of men and cattle and elephant trains. They are very tortuous, for rather than remove undergrowth or build a bridge the Laos will swing several miles from their course. When a stream is reached it must be forded. During the rainy season a traveler often gets weather-bound between two streams, which have risen too high to ford, and are too bold to swim. I have many times known of mail carriers being thus delayed for several weeks. In such a case there is but one thing to do—sit down and wait for the water to fall. This condition of roads does not imply a total lack of bridges. There are a few here and there. Usually they are made by felling trees, squaring their trunks, and letting two or more run parallel and closely together across the stream or gorge. I knew of one gentleman, an Englishman by birth, who came to such a bridge which, however, had not been made closely together. He started across astride of his pony, but halfway over the pony beneath him decided to

try the other tree trunk, and before he knew what was up, our hero found himself wildly striving to balance his body as he stood *à la* Colossus of Rhodes. When he thought to look down for his pony he beheld him mildly cropping grass in the ravine below. Recently ten-yard wide government roads have been built to connect some of the large cities, and there is a promise of better things for the future.

Roughly speaking, the country inhabited by the Yuan Laos is an immense plateau, interlaced with mountain chains, which naturally divide the country into provinces. It is well watered by rivers which, flowing southward at Pak Nam Po, form the great Me Nam. To the far north the streams flow to the east of north, emptying into the proud Me Kawng. Thus it will be seen that the land of the Laos is made up of mountain and plain and valley, having, for the tropics, a wide range of climate and great diversity of products. Owing to the tropical heat, abundant rainfall, and annual overflow of rivers, it is a very fertile country, indeed. A little scratching of the soil and dropping of seeds is all that is necessary to insure a harvest. In places, the jungles, deep and unbroken, lie basking in the sunshine, protecting the hoards of wild beasts and creatures that there make their homes. In striking contrast, stretch the sunny rice plains and the tempting fruit groves. But always, everywhere, there is teeming life, animal and vegetable, on land and in the water. The villages and cities are all gathered about the banks of the water

courses, for it must be remembered that this people live close to nature, leaning upon her for support, and so gather about the streams where water can be had in abundance during even the long, hot, dry season of some six months.

Although wholly within the tropics, the climate is not so hot as that of southern India, and it is altogether free from the hot winds which scourge that land. The year is divided into two seasons, namely, the rainy and the dry. The rainy season commences with the southwest monsoons, about the last of April. It does not necessarily rain every day, but usually there is a hard shower of one or two hours' length, preceded by a scurry of wind that is delightfully refreshing after the months of sun and heat. Oftentimes it rains steadily for several days, and occasionally several weeks of almost constant rain causes floods, which are very destructive to vegetable life. I have known whole fruit groves and gardens to be thus entirely swept away. Toward November the wind veers round to the northeast, and sweeps away from the sky the rain clouds. Then for six weeks there is ideal weather. The breeze is fresh and the nights are so cool that a fire to dress and breakfast by is enjoyable, though the thermometer seldom drops below 55°. The land carols with the songs of birds, the orange hangs golden, nestled in the fragrance of blossoms upon the same mother tree.

“ . . . red-ripe as can be,
Pomegranates are chapping and splitting in halves
on the tree,”

and the lotus coquettes with the palms above and the reflection beneath. It is the glad harvest season, and the yellow grain hangs heavy, awaiting the reaper's scythe. The rains are passed, but nature revives her own by a nightly visit of dew, which equals a light shower. After this golden season of the year the winds veer to the south, and before one is aware the heat becomes intense. The river has become a thread; and life is barely endurable from noontime until the evening shadows lengthen. So parched has the ground become that the mere hopping of a disconsolate bird across the road causes a flurry of dust. There is no vegetable life, save that which is artificially watered or that which is "planted beside the rivers of water, whose leaf also doth not wither." February, March, and April are the most dreaded months, though the sickly season is delayed until the first rain falls, which are more or less scattering. These are not sufficient to wash away the refuse of the villages, but instead causes decomposition and a multitude of fumes. Fever is the inevitable result, so that the last of April, May, and June are known as the sickly season. The degree of the oppressiveness of the heat depends much upon the altitude. For this reason the more northern cities, such as Chieng Rai, are much cooler and more healthful.

Some one has laughingly said that one of the chief summer problems of life in Hong Kong is to determine whether the mushrooms which grow on one's shoes at night are edible or not. This sounds like gross exaggeration, but truly the damp is in-

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describable, not only in Hong Kong, but in Laos-land as well. It is not advisable to don a suit of underwear in the morning that was the least bit damp with perspiration the night before, for the second state is worse than the first. One may walk about the house even an hour after dawn and see the moisture forming in beads upon the walls and furniture and trickling downward. I have many times wrung water from my tent curtain in touring. Capsules and pills must be kept in tightly-corked bottles, with a piece of absorbent cotton in the top. Books ought to be taken from the shelves and carefully wiped every few weeks during the damp season, or else they will horribly mildew.

It would be difficult to find a fairer inland country than Laos-land. Nature is lavish of her fruits, flowers, and verdure. Every place that would otherwise be barren or unattractive she festoons with vines. The scenery of mountain and river is as beautiful as that of the Blue Ridge and Hudson of our own country. The rapids are bold and grand. Those of the Me Ping leading to Chieng Mai are unsurpassed in interest. Of them Dr. McGilvary wrote in a letter to Davidson College: "I doubt very much whether there is another road of forty miles in the earth's surface having such universally beautiful and magnificent scenery as where the river breaks between these mountains." The rapids of the river leading to Nan are much bolder, and usually boats have to be unloaded at them, and their goods carried around on the shoulders of men, while the boats are dragged up. In the down-

stream trip "shooting" the rapids is exciting and dangerous. In 1898, Dr. and Mrs. Peoples, who were then alone in Nan, found that they had to bring their sick child to America, as the only hope of saving his life. They had to shoot the Nan river rapids during a flood season. Of that experience Mrs. Peoples wrote as follows:—

"The morning of our last day in Nan arrived bleak with rain. The day before a procession of Christian men and women filed in at the gate, bearing their parting gifts; a pet chicken, a few eggs, vegetables, from their tiny garden, fruit, flowers—just what they could bring, with love and tears. To each of their houses we had gone for a last prayer together and last words, few but fraught with meaning to their hearts and ours, for we were leaving them like sheep without a shepherd. 'Don't forget us.' 'Be faithful to your Christian vows.' 'We can't forget, pray for us, *Paw Liang, Me Liang.*' Down the slippery bank into the little canoes we crawled; room to sit, or go on hands and knees only, for the next week. A bend in the river shut from our eyes the lonely group watching us, and we lean hard upon their Strength and ours.

"Daylight of the next morning, and a hail from the village: 'You cannot pass the rapids, *Paw Liang.*'

"'Is there not a pilot who will take us through for double pay? I must take my sick child on.'

"'No. Last year a boat with seven men tried

to shoot the rapids at high water and all were lost. Life is better than money.'

"We decided to push on and see the rapids. The first one is passed unnoticed, completely submerged. The rain is falling in torrents, the captain stands upon the head of the canoe stripped to the waistcloth, a twelve-foot bamboo pole balanced in his hand ready to sheer away from dangerous rocks, silent, vigilant, unmindful of the pitiless rain, although his lips are blue and the frail craft often quivers with the spasm of cold that shakes him. The turbid river has no confines now. Old landmarks are obliterated, our tiny canoes seeming a few pieces of driftwood on its seething bosom. Soon the tossing waves and hoarse roar of Kang Luang is ahead, and slowly we creep along the side, where half-submerged trees threaten to rake us off; and then with paddles flying for dear life, we dash down the swift incline until we strike the outer rim of the huge whirlpool, when, with marvelous skill, the boats are swung round and headed upstream, for a brief rest. In a moment more we find ourselves safe, for the time, among trees upon the mountain side.

"Then we pushed on. We found the 'thousand *wa* rapid'—two thousand yards—was a swift descent of roaring, tumbling, foam-crested waves, that cast high breakers upon the half-buried mountain rice fields, green with young grain. Six days and nights we were in these tempests of waters, then out of the mountain-inclosed channel into the broad waters at Ta It we glide, the seventh day,

thankful to climb from our cramped quarters into the larger boat."

In the mountains abound beautiful and rare ferns, from the delicate maidenhair to tall fronds, some fifteen or twenty feet high. I was especially attracted to a delicate fern whose under side of leaves was a silvery white. Orchids brighten the ground and hang from the trees. Some of them are smaller than a snowdrop, while others are larger than a tulip. They are all shades, from a pure white to a gold or scarlet. They are gathered by natives from the forests during the months of April and May, and are carried to the city for sale. Maidens like to wear the sprays in their dark hair and housekeepers buy the plants to tie to the veranda post or tree in the yard, where they thrive well and live and bloom. Excepting orchids, few delicate flowers, such as our violets, are found. Usually the blooms are large, showy, and heavy in perfume. Many plants that are not indigenous take kindly to their adopted home, and so one finds in the gardens of missionaries and natives to whom they have given seeds and plants, many flowers that one admires in an American garden. Care and thought are given to the cultivation of flowers, as they are much loved and admired by the natives. Almost every home has its garden or flowerpots. Besides adorning the hair of maidens and children, flowers are used in all the religious and official ceremonies. Almost any man or woman one meets can tell the names of most of the different flowers, plants, and trees, and can

also enumerate their various uses—as for dyes, oils, and resins or drugs.

The hot sun so develops the cellulose of vegetables that they lose their crispness and are not delicate, to our way of thinking. A great variety of beans, cucumbers, and gourds abound and they are eaten with much relish by all. Melons are plentiful but inferior in quality. Mustard, garlic, and pepper are perhaps more extensively grown in gardens than any other vegetable. Onions are considered among the greatest of delicacies and the word *hawm*—onion—is synonymous with “fragrant,” rather identical, as, for instance, a man will exclaim upon smelling a tuberose, *hawm*, and a woman, hiding her face beneath the neck of her babe, will lovingly repeat, *hawm*, *hawm*. The sweet potato and yam abound and are of a good quality and flavor. Many roots and leaves of trees and vines are eaten whose English names I am ignorant of. The leaves are put into the curry pot and stew up well, garlic and red pepper giving a flavor if it is lacking. Elephant ears or caladiums are abundant, and their starchy roots are considered as toothsome as a yam. Indeed, by some are more highly esteemed, as the corms are a gentle stimulant and are diaphoretic.

One of the most useful plants of the land is known as *curcuma*, being a genus of the order *Scitaminece*. There are several species, all alike, having fleshy tuberous roots. These are cooked when young and eaten. In this state the rhizoma abounds in a kind of arrowroot. When matured,

it is very aromatic in smell, reminding one of mangoes, and having properties resembling ginger. In this state, it is finely powdered and called *tumeric*. This *tumeric* is used as the principal ingredient of curry powder; is employed as a medicine, it having an eliminating and stimulating effect upon the system; mixed with lime, it forms part of the "chew" commonly known as betel; and it is used as a dye stuff to produce shades of yellow and golden brown; and, last, but far from least, is employed as a powder to dust the bodies of babies and children from crown to toe, thus beautifying them. Another species of *cucuma* is known as *zedoary*. This is highly medicinal, being a most powerful sudorific. This *cucuma* is well known to Europeans of India and the East Indies, as it is indigenous to the whole sweep of southeast Asia.

In no clime are palms more at home than in the land of the Laos, and so one finds numerous species, from the clinging rattan to the stately palmyra and lofty areca, with its cluster of sweet-scented blooms. It is hardly necessary to describe them, as palms have become as familiar to Americans as the roses in our gardens. So we will confine ourselves to looking at some of the uses to which they are put. The cocoanut palm is eaten either young or when mature, the taste at the different stages varying greatly. The edible part of the nut is much used in the making of sweetmeats. It is scraped, steeped in boiling water, then strained through a cloth, and used as milk. New rice is often boiled in this milk and is consid-

ered a great delicacy. When plucked from the tree and eaten, the cocoanut is a very different article of diet from what we know. It is soft like an apple, delicately flavored, and is so easily digested that children fatten upon it.

The sap of the palm tree makes a wine which is highly intoxicating when fermented. This sap boiled down makes a sugar, which is much esteemed, and somewhat resembles in taste our own maple sugar. Oil is extracted from the nuts and pulp, which is used by mothers as a kind of cure-all. Sago is made, but not extensively. The terminal bud is sometimes cut and boiled. It destroys the tree; so everyone cannot indulge this taste. The *lan* palm is famous, as its dried leaves are used as a substitute for writing paper. The words are written with a sharp-pointed style, and over them powdered charcoal or oil is passed, which remains fixed in the indented letters, the surface then being rubbed and polished to a golden yellow. The leaves are then bound into books.

Next to the palm the plantain or banana is applied to the greatest number of uses. Bowring claims fifty varieties for Siam, and there should be as many in Laos-land. I have eaten twenty different kinds, varying in size from three inches to a foot, and in flavor from a sweet to an acid. They form a very important part of the diet of the people. Besides being eaten in their natural state they are fried, roasted, or made into cakes. Children when three days old are fed upon one of the species. This fruit, so soft and nutritious, is a great blessing

to the aged, and one can readily see how the legend is accredited that Allah sent the plantain to the prophet in his old age, when he had become toothless and feeble. It is one of the few fruits that is perennially ripe. The green leaves are employed for numberless domestic uses, such as wrapping up bundles, forming a cool, fresh mat for the ground, and making an impromptu hat for use during a sudden shower. It might be thought that these slightly-clad people would not dread exposure to the rain, but they have a horror of having rain fall upon their heads. The dried leaves are used principally to roll around tobacco, forming a cheroot.

Excepting a few perennial fruits, mangoes are the first fruit after the long, dry season. They are larger and finer flavored than the Siamese mangoes. One species called *sam pī* (three years) because they bear the third year after planting, are especially excellent in both size and taste. The mango trees of the jungles make a kind of rendezvous for wild beasts, and a blind near such a tree is a most excellent vantage ground for a huntsman. The trees grow as large as an elm, and the fruit should be plucked and not allowed to drop. I was once interested in watching a scene about a certain mango tree in the beginning of a rainy season. A hard shower was on, and at intervals a skurry of wind would bring to the ground a dozen or more mangoes. At once there was a wild rush through the rain for the tree, not only by the children perched on the watch, but by several elderly men and women, two ponies, a pig, and a group of

chickens. They all scrambled together for the mangoes, and then retired to await the next skurry. This was a case of stolen sweets, for not one of the marauders had a right to the fruit.

The tamarind grows to the size of an immense oak and lives for centuries. Its shade is delightfully cool and refreshing, and its fruit is one of the greatest of nature's blessings to the tropics. The pod-like fruit is filled with a pulp, which is at once acidulous and sweet. Great care is exercised in seeding the pulp and packing it away in clay jars for use in curries, and to make cooling drinks and ciders, and to stew into sauce. It is medicinal, being a gentle, cooling laxative, and is much employed in tropical fevers.

Pineapples are abundant and are of a good flavor; oranges abound in some dozen or more varieties; lemons are not indigenous, but limes admirably take their place; guavas are eaten green or cooked or made into excellent jelly by foreigners; citron, pomegranates, custard apples, *jack fruit*, and the famed *durian*, are also found. Plums in many varieties are much liked by the natives, but usually a foreigner has to acquire a taste for them. To the north of the provinces are found attractive combinations of tropical and temperate fruits, the raspberry and peach being found among the latter class.

This enumeration of fruits, flowers, and plants does not claim to be complete. A volume dedicated to the subject would only suffice to make it so.

In the jungles are found many valuable kinds of

woods, the best known to occidentals being the teak wood. It is cut in the forests by British timber companies; is stamped with the company's mark; is then dragged by elephants to the nearest stream; floated to Raheng on the high water; and there claimed by the company whose mark is upon it. It is there bound into rafts and floated to Bangkok, where it is partly sawn and shipped to England and Norway, principally to be used in ship building, as it is one of the few woods which does not warp with exposure and heat. Besides teak there are very many other valuable trees in these jungle wilds, whose English names I am unfamiliar with. There has recently been formed a company which deals with hard woods exclusive of teak. There are immense resources in the Laos country for such companies.

The dreaded upas is a child of these wilds. The gamboge of Siam is known to be the highest prized in the world's market. There are other trees in Laos forests yielding valuable gums and resins, chief of which are the trees that the lac insect, *coccus lacca*, inhabits. This curious hemipterous insect in some respects reminds one of the cochineal insect, *coccus cacti*. They puncture the twigs of the tree and soon entomb themselves in the resinous matter which oozes out, and upon which they feed. They lay myriads of minute eggs and die, their dead bodies forming a dome over the eggs. The eggs hatch and the young eat their way through the dead bodies and swarm over the twigs and young branches in such a manner as to give the appear-

ance of fine blood-red dust. Successive generations, dwelling upon the same tree, render the twigs heavy in a coating oftentimes an inch in thickness. The natives break these twigs, which are known in commerce as stick-lac, and which are exceedingly valuable for the resinous substance which they contain. It is wrought into the beautiful lacquer ware for which the East is famed.

It is almost impossible for Americans with their twentieth century methods of life to appreciate to what extent bamboo enters into many phases of Laos life. Every part of the tree can be put to some use. Its shoots when young are made into a savory dish, much resembling asparagus in both looks and taste. Its roots, when tender, are also eaten. When grown, its beauty is such as to throw the poet and artist into raptures; its utility of such diversity that it becomes the backbone of the land.

Bamboo grows in clumps or, more accurately, sprouts from a subterranean rhizoma which throws up from ten to one hundred straight erect stems. These shoot up with surprising rapidity, often growing from one to two feet in a single day. They grow to almost their full height unbranched, and then throw out horizontal branches the weight of which causes the proud stem to bow. The leaves are willow-shaped, and give a feathery appearance, which is irresistible in charm and beauty. In the breeze the stems sway and nod, and the leaves quiver and rustle, reminding one of a giant ostrich plume. The stems are externally covered with a substance which is remarkably siliceous. Some

species are so hard that they supply fire by friction. The stems are jointed and hollow, save at the nodes, where a strong but thin partition divides them. Thus a large joint will form a convenient water-bucket, a small one a pipestem. When the partitions are knocked out, the stem forms a pipe, much used in irrigation. It is possible to build a house and not use a single bit of material other than bamboo, excepting grass-thatch for a cover. It is split fine and woven into mats, which form the walls of many Laos homes. The long stems are cut into half, and these sections split roughly with a sharp knife until it lies flat, in which form it is called *fak*, and is used for flooring the homes of the peasant class. And so we could go on enumerating its usages.

Rice and sugar cane, cotton, and tobacco are the staple crops. The cotton is of two distinct kinds, one being the shrub kind familiar to our southern States, the other growing on trees, which attain the height of forty or sixty feet, bear a brilliant red flower, and produce a pod containing a fine yellowish-white wool-like fiber. Mulberry trees are grown for silk culture.

CHAPTER VII

THE FACE OF LAOS-LAND (CONTINUED)

THE diversity of plant life is only exceeded by that of the animal world. These range in size from the infinitesimal ant to the huge elephant; in nature, from the cooing dove to the bloodthirsty tiger; in agility, from the creeping tortoise to the monkey swinging by his tail, leaping from tree to tree and wailing like a tempest wind through a ship's rigging. On the land, in the water, in the ground beneath, and in the sky above, they live and move and have their being. In the trackless jungle, rhinoceros, boars, cattle, bears, deer, and countless such creatures make their homes. Humming birds and peacocks, blue jays, and long-legged swamp fowls, add color or music to the scene. The porcupine must not be overlooked, for natives firmly believe in its ability to shoot its quills at its adversary when angry or frightened. I have repeatedly heard it attested that when hungry it brings down a banana by a deft thrust of the quill at the stem.

As a rule, the tigers are comparatively harmless. When camped in the forest we have many a night been wakened by their cries as they prowled in search of food. At such times our attendants would beat upon bamboo joints, gongs, or anything at hand which would render a sound. If this did

not suffice to send him off, a huge bonfire would at once be made. Only the boldest of tigers would approach such a light. When once a tiger has tasted human blood he becomes what is known as a man-eating tiger. There are very few such in the Laos country, but one can never determine by simply seeing the beast or hearing his voice which he may be.

I knew of three natives who had to camp over night in the wild forest. They built a huge bonfire and lay beside it to rest, as they thought, and not to sleep. But the day's tramp had been too much for them, and unconsciously they fell asleep. The timid one of the three had begged to lie in the middle. His companions were awakened by his awful cry of pain and fright, in time to see him vanish into the darkness, slung across the back of a tiger.

When a tiger become a man-eater he usually haunts a certain community, living in the neighboring woods and roaming forth into the villages when hungry. In such communities the pigpens and buffalo stalls are built of heavy logs. Cats, dogs, and chickens are brought up into the house at nightfall, and the ladder drawn up after them. During the day hours no person would dare go alone from village to village, but the inhabitants move about in groups of a dozen or more with their long sabers in hand. At once will come the question to a practical American, Why not kill the tigers, since they are so few, and put an end to the whole matter? The following instance will explain why they do not:—

At a village, a day's journey from Lakawn, there roved such a man-eating tiger. He had eaten a large number of people from the villages clustered about. One sunny day he sprang upon a woman and carried her into the jungle. The mangled body was found by a band of some fifty men, who turned out to beat the forest. In a fit of desperation their instinctive dread, reinforced, possibly, by the Buddhistic belief in reincarnation, was overcome, and four of the bravest of the men consented to be left with guns and spears in the tree above to await the sure return of the beast for his prey. The sound of retiring footsteps had scarcely died away, when the poor, helpless, mangled corpse beneath "began to quiver and twitch, and finally to jerk its limbs." In a few more seconds it would have been up, and so there was nothing for these four brave Nimrods to do but to hie them down from the tree and speed for the village like stricken deer. A man-eating tiger is bad, but there are worse things in a Laos man's life of bondage to superstition and fear.

The most hostile of all beasts to the foreigner is, occasionally, the water buffalo. For some reason he is often angered by the sight of a white face, and will rush in frenzy toward it. Usually they are docile, and a child can lead them to water and play upon their backs. They often become angry with one another and fight fiercely, goring with their horns until death ends the fray. In such a fight, their owners cut bushes and pile them quickly and simultaneously between the two creatures as they

draw from each other preparatory to an onrush. They look to take last aim, and seeing only the pile of brush, allow themselves to be led away.

Leaf insects and stick bugs abound. I shall never forget my amazement the first time my attention was called to them. During a journey, we were resting beside a tiny stream, when I was attracted to a bush beside me, because of the delicate manner in which its leaves were ribbed and veined. Drawing near, I put out my hand to pluck a leaf, but drew back as it began to crawl away.

Reptiles are multitudinous. One species deserves a special word, because of the untold benefit it is to all residents, native or foreign. It is a kind of lizard, which inhabits houses and lives upon flies and insects. So diligent are they that there positively are no flies in the houses. If one ventures in during the day, let him beware, for no sooner does he deign to alight upon the wall, than, presto! and he is at peace within the stomach of his destroyer. These lizards are perfectly harmless, and are no annoyance to even the most careful of housekeepers. It is a frequent occurrence to see one of these little creatures fall to the floor, the jar snapping off its tail. Apparently its owner is not much disconcerted and in its place of retreat it soon grows another. These lizards are called by the natives *chakims*. But for these *chakims*, flies would be a pest to the land.

Beetles are brilliant in color, and butterflies are more varied in size and color than in any other place I know of. The specimens I saw in the Indian

collection at the Queen's Garden Museum were much inferior to what I observed in the Laos forests. Ants are so multitudinous that it is impossible to escape from them. Besides the ordinary house ant, and black ants of many kinds, there is a large red ant that is more peppery in temper and hotter in sting than any other little creature. They wage fierce battles among themselves, and I have often seen two different trains, meeting upon a narrow fence board, fight to the death for the right of way. Their bodies when crushed exude an acid, which removes the tenacious stain of the betel nut. Though the natives have no knowledge of the chemical properties of this formic acid they make a very practical use of it.

Laos-land is one of the homes of what is commonly called the white ant. In fact these creatures are not ants at all, although their habits are very similar, but they belong to a different order of insects, and are known as termites. They are scavengers of the land, consuming either decaying animal or vegetable matter. They are more nearly omnivorous than any other creature. Though these termites do a beneficent work as scavengers, we cannot feel very grateful to them, as the good they do is apparently overbalanced by the great destruction which is wrought by them. I have known of heavy beams of houses being reduced to a shell by these creatures. When climbing up into a house they always work in a tunnel of clay. This they make so rapidly that they often scale six or eight feet in a night. It is well to have a man in-

spect every pillar of your house the first thing each morning, else you may open your trunk or camphor chest to find only a powdered mass within, or, worse still, your book shelves may be utterly demolished. A missionary never returns from itinerating without a resigned feeling as he enters his home. For he knows not what destruction awaits him in spite of watchmen left to guard against attacks of termites. The "soldiers" of these termites have large, strongly developed mandibles. When camping in forests we have often been awakened by a tapping sound, like a gentle shower, which proved to be only the snapping of the multitudinous mandibles of a hord of termites feasting upon the dried leaves outside our tent. At such a time, it is well to place baskets on an impromptu scaffold and tie cloths soaked in coal oil around the legs of scaffolding and cots.

The streams of the country teem with fish of many kinds, and the people resort to every known method to catch them. They fish with hook and line, set traps, cast nets, stretch seines, at night harpoon with light and spear, dig in the mud with their hands for them, and sit patiently by the hour with dip net in hand, putting the small fish they catch into a basket beside them.

The jungles of the land of the Laos are also the home of herds of wild elephants. A few of these creatures nature has stamped as albinos, but to Siamese and Laos they are a most necessary adjunct to royalty, the want of one being considered most ominous. It is true that these creatures are not

now kept in royal stables like those described by tourists several years ago, but, nevertheless they occupy in the hearts of the people a venerated place. And thus Siam has come to be known as the Kingdom of the White Elephant, and one of the king's titles is that of the Lord of the White Elephant. The national flag, a white elephant upon a red field, bears proof of this ancient homage.

There are, perhaps, no creatures that show greater sagacity in comprehending the nature of their tasks, and in adapting themselves to them, than elephants. They will pile teak logs all day and not place one wrongly or unevenly. A male elephant can thus lift on his tusks a weight equal to half a ton. Here, in the land of the Laos, they are the only power for moving immense weights. An elephant is the most sure-footed of beasts, and because of this, and for other admirable traits, he is a very desirable means of locomotion. When traveling he will break from the path interlacing vines and twigs, eating what is tender and palatable and throwing aside what is not. If he has to ascend a steep mountain, he will do so by kneeling on his forelegs, thus keeping the howdah on his back fairly level. In descending he will reverse the order. If a stream is reached he will step into it slowly, one foot at a time, until the channel is reached, which is too deep for fording. Then he inflates his sides and swims across. His pace is a kind of shuffle which gives a peculiar movement to the howdah that often causes seasickness to the novice.



MISSIONARIES STARTING UPON A JOURNEY.

Photograph by the Rev. Hugh Taylor, of Laos Mission.

Lakawn is known as one of the greatest elephant centers of the country, and at times hundreds may be seen daily on her streets. Formerly, if a prince journeyed, he must have a retinue of a hundred or more elephants to accompany him, attention of the people being called to the procession by the beating of gongs as it moved. Elephants are not fully grown until they are some thirty years old, and they live to the good age of one hundred or one hundred and fifty years.

It is not generally known that an elephant's stomach is like a camel's, and has a chamber for storing water, which holds some ten gallons. If he becomes hot or dusty in travel he can convey a part of this water into his trunk and indulge in the luxury of a shower bath. Or if thirsty, can convey the water to his mouth instead. Though these huge beasts are so strong and sturdy in looks, they are very susceptible to heat, and have to be taken by their drivers to the jungles during the hot season. It is because of the original jungle home of the elephant, the dense dark jungle, that they have so short a range of vision, and are so acute of hearing. The timidity of the elephant is almost proverbial. When alarmed it will raise its trunk and trumpet loud and long. This he will also do when in pain or greatly angered. Thus the name "trunk" for that organ, a corruption of the French *trompe*.

An elephant in an American zoo is away from his environments and is simply an immense, ugly, awkward creature of whom one is half afraid. But

see him in his Laos home, where the "spicy garlic smells," and amid the "sunshine and the palm trees and the tinkly temple bells"; see him upon the rice plains, with a setting of tropical jungle growth, grazing quietly and with care beating each tuft of grass upon his leg to free it of dust; see him reaching up for a coveted bunch of bananas or else wrapping his trunk about a palm tree and swaying it until it comes to the ground with its prized cluster of nuts; see him thus, and your heart will warm toward him, you will adopt him and love him almost as does the dark-eyed Laos.

But little is known of the mineral wealth of Laos-land, for it is wholly undeveloped. However, we know that the country forms the very heart of that system that on its outskirts has been worked with abundant return. It is certain that some gold is in the country, for hill tribes find it in their streams and barter it to Yünnun traders. Iron is mined a little by the natives and made into knives and sabers and scissors, the last named being of a huge, cumbersome kind. Gems and precious stones are found, by chance at times, and to the far north there are wells which yield petroleum, and others which yield salt. The latter is a source of much revenue to the villages owning them. Some future day will doubtless reveal an immense mineral wealth in Laos-land.

CHAPTER VIII

THE HEART OF LAOS-LAND

GOETHE says: "Marriage is the beginning and the summit of all civilization," and it is doubtless due to the sacredness of married life among them that the Laos enjoy such a considerable degree of refinement, culture, and morals as they do. Compared with our Christian standards they are far below the ideal, even the mediocre; but when regarded in the light of centuries of heathen darkness, they have certainly attained to a high degree; a higher state than any other people have ever acquired under similar circumstances. Among the peasant class, which forms the great mass of the population—the stamina of the land—polygamy is almost unknown. The princes often have two or more wives at a time, and a harem, if they so wish.

This being true, we would expect to find woman occupying a place of honor in the family life. It is a well-known fact that among all Shans women are allowed a freedom of movement in the village and markets, keeping stalls, transacting business, holding property, and in many respects the equal of man. But it is among the Laos Shans that we find woman holding more nearly her true place in the home and community than with any other non-Christian people upon the globe. Just what this position is will be apparent from the following pages.

In appearance the Laos more nearly resemble the Japanese than any other Asiatic people. The skin is of an olive hue, which, because of exposure to the sun, becomes a gingerbread color on the bodies of the peasant class. The eyes are of a dark brown, and the hair straight and jet black. In stature the race is finely proportioned, the men averaging about five feet and a half in height, and the women a half foot less. The bearing of the race is manly, the woman walking like "youthful Dianas, with a quick, firm, elastic tread." A few quotations will illuminate the subject.

"The *Chaus*, or princes, are generally very fine-looking men, tall, and fair, with good noses. . . . The other men are tall, stout, hardy, and active. The women are also tall and remarkably well proportioned, very fair and decidedly a handsome race. . . . The children are particularly fair." "The quiet, self-possessed Shan has more real grit and manliness than the Burman."*

"The Laos people are peaceful, submissive, patient, sober, faithful, frank, and simple—but credulous and superstitious."†

"As regards the women, they are more active, more industrious and more intelligent than the men. They have an undoubted empire over their husbands, and can drive them away when they are not content with them."‡

* Colquhoun's *Amongst the Shans*.

† Pallegoix, I, 38.

‡ From M. Graudjean, quoted in Bowring's *Siam*.

"All [a household near Chieng Mai where Mr. Hallet, with Dr. McGilvary, happened to stop for information] seemed anxious that we should have correct information, even the youngest daughter breaking in to mention the name of a village which the others had forgotten. There was no timidity, no shyness, no awkwardness, no apparent self-consciousness, amongst the neat and comely little damsels. Their demeanor was courtesy itself, and their manners and deportment were as graceful and perfect as could be found in any drawing-room in Europe."*

Thus it may be seen that the Laos are no mean race. They are, also, very reverent of age and authority, and are strong in personal attachments. Though so affectionate, they are very undemonstrative in this regard. A proud and happy husband and father will return home from an absence of a week or more, climb up to the veranda, pour water over his feet, take a drink, will then seat himself, and glancing toward his wife ask in an off-hand way if all is well. Quietly the children will creep up to him and he will gather them in his arms without an iota of apparent, excited joy. This is paradoxical, for this southern people, true to their clime, are emotional and demonstrative.

In regard to woman's position Bowring quotes Father Bigaudet as follows:—

"In Burma and Siam the doctrines of Buddha have produced a striking, and to the lover of true

* Hallet's *One Thousand Miles on an Elephant*.

civilization, a most interesting result, viz., the almost complete equality of the condition of women with that of men. In these countries, women are not so universally confined in the interior of their houses, without the remotest chance of ever appearing in public. They are seen circulating freely in the streets; they preside at the *comptoir*, and hold an almost exclusive possession of the bazaar. Their social position is more elevated in every respect than that of the persons of their sex in the regions where Buddhism is not the predominating creed. They may be said to be men's companions, and not their slaves. . . . The marital rights are fully acknowledged by a respectful behavior toward their lords. In spite of all that has been said by superficial observers, I feel convinced that manners are less corrupted in these countries where women enjoy liberty than in those where they are buried alive by a despotic custom in the grave of an opprobrious slavery."

With the closing paragraph I most heartily concur, but the rest of the quotation setting forth a view which is quite popular, is erroneous. Buddhism is the adopted religion of the Laos, and the very earliest possible date of its adoption is in the fifth century A. D. We know from the mythical chronicles of the Shans that woman held the place she now occupies for ages before Buddhist missionaries ever came to the country. That the chronicles are mainly myths does not weaken the conclusion that woman held her present position at that time, for myths would prove that as conclusively as facts.

Also there are many tribes among the Laos that have never been converted to Buddhism, and among these tribes woman's position is the same as among the Buddhist Laos. So upon investigation one necessarily concludes that woman's position is due to a high racial development, instead of to the influence of Buddhism.

Her real position is interesting, not alone because of its uniqueness, but for its apparent contradictions arising from the conflicting influences of natural inclinations of the race with the teachings of Buddhism, mixed with their primitive religion of spirit-worship.

Probably it may be best understood by looking at some of the customs gathered about wooing and marriage.

We would expect in this land of warm skies and heavily-scented flowers to find romance ruling, and so it does. A maiden loves to dream, as she coils her heavy black hair, of her dark-eyed lover who will come to woo when the sun is down. And when she discerns his light footstep upon the path she will give the scarf about her shoulders a deft turn and the flowers in her hair an extra touch and then compose herself upon the veranda mat to await his approach with as much apparent unconcern as an American maiden could assume.

All wooing is done upon the wide veranda, where no harsher light than the moon's soft rays may be found. What of the dark of the moon, you ask? Ah! but you must know that no young gallant, however bold or brave, would be so rash as to

venture out on a dark night. Surely you must know that if he did so, an evil spirit or hobgoblin would seize him and either carry him off bodily or else brand him with some disease or mishap. So on moonlight nights one may see in all directions the graceful forms of young men coming and going, each bent upon the same errand. He tells no one where he is going, for he is "ashamed," unless, indeed, he has with him his bosom friend, who is sure to reveal no secrets. It is customary for young men to do all their wooing in company with their chum, for if afterwards his sweetheart should become angry with him and should wish to accuse him of breach of delicacy such as touching her hand or the breaking of any other social law, her word would be taken in court as final and conclusive proof, unless there be a witness. In such a case the accused lover must pay over to the family of the young woman the usual spirit-fine, whatever sum that may be, which varies with different clans.

Though the young lover is so careful to let no one know where he is going, as he leaves his sweetheart's home he sings aloud her praises in a rude blank verse of his own composition, comparing her in beauty to the fabled princess of the North, and as she listens she wonders if she is more beautiful to him than stars and more precious than rubies or diamonds.

"All men have some imagination, but
The Lover and the Poet
Are of imagination all compact."

These chanted pæans of praise to his love are accompanied by music picked upon a *pia*, a soft-toned instrument, made with three strings, an ebony stick, and the half of a cocoanut shell.

Usually a maiden is free to marry the man of her choice. As there are no colleges to be first graduated from, no fortunes to be first won, this she does early in life. To our way of thinking, lovers are surrounded with too many petty rules of decorum. There is no attention paid in public, and so no walks together to the sweetmeat stalls, no little trips together to the *lakawns* to see the wonderful dancing, for all this would be highly immodest and unbecoming. But when the couple have decided that they love one another "truly, truly," the consent of the parents or guardians is sought, usually by a go-between. If it is granted, an early day is set for the marriage, at which time the groom pays to the family of his bride the accustomed spirit-fines, signs a marriage contract, drawn up by the heads of the two families, comes to the house of his bride, where together they receive her parents' blessing and become man and wife.

By marriage the groom has left his father's house in the full sense of the word. If he has sisters he cannot inherit a single fruit grove nor rice field. He becomes a son to his parents-in-law, and his earnings for several years go toward the general family support. He also changes his former liege lord and becomes a serf to the lord of the family of his wife.

Seldom, if ever, do a young couple go to house-

keeping at once. They remain in the home of the bride for a year or more, or always, according to circumstances, as the size of the family and such things. In the homes one often finds three or four generations living in comparative peace and harmony. Motherhood is honorable and girl babies are as welcome as sons.

Thus it may be seen that the vast majority of the property is in the hands of the women, and they manage it, too. A man would not dare sell a buffalo or rice plain without first obtaining his wife's consent. In fact, he would seldom care to trust his own judgment in the matter, but would prefer a consultation with his wife. The wife also holds the purse and is business manager for the family.

Parents in conversation will often express concern that their sons will marry well, but never their daughters. As for them, they hope they will get a "good" husband. I have often inquired if a certain young man was wise in the choice of a wife and invariably would come, in substance, the reply, "Oh, yes, the young woman is well off, as she inherits three buffaloes, two rice fields, a good fruit grove, and the homestead is to be hers when her parents die." When making similar inquiries as to an affianced groom, the reply would be: "Yes, I think he will make *Kam Di* a good husband. He does not get drunk, and he is not very quick-tempered."

The wife and daughters always form part of the family circle upon the veranda; and, in brief, it may

be said that they form a part of all the life of the land, save the monastic life of the temple.

There is some distinction between man's and woman's work. But the whole family labor together upon the rice plains in both the planting and the harvesting seasons. Men and women alike know the art of cooking, though the women always prepare the food when they are around. They spin the thread, and weave the cloth, while the men make mats and baskets and prepare fresh thatch and flooring for the homes. All the above being true, an American is astounded when he beholds a family going from village to village and sees the husband striding along with umbrella over his head and the wife following bearing a bundle and the baby.

Divorce is easy, and the laws are in favor of the women. A wife can tie her husband's clothes in a bundle, toss them out of the door, and bid him leave, and it is needless to add that he does not wait for a second invitation to do so. I have never known a husband to return to his wife under such circumstances unless he be a Christian. Then it takes every argument of the missionary and the true grace of God in the man, to bring it about. If the couple have acquired property since marriage, it must be divided according to marriage contract, if there be such, or as the custom of the clan or province may be. If a man wishes to be divorced from his wife, he cannot bid her go, for the property is hers, so he must needs creep away. Often a wife has no idea as to whether her husband has

left, or has gotten into a drunken row and is in jail, until the weeks go into months and he does not return. She then consoles herself by marrying again. At one time, the man whom we had employed as watchman had a quarrel with his wife, and she put him out of the house and banged the door upon his back. He did not dare go in while she was angry for fear she might bid him leave for good. At another time the wife of the watchman on a neighboring compound decided she could not endure her husband's ways any longer, and as they were not living upon their own property she returned to her people. He tried in every known way either to make her return to him or else give up half her jewels which she had bought since marriage. But she would do neither. And so he went across the mountains to another province and married again and in a few months she, too, had another husband. Had he gone to law she would have been compelled to give up half her jewels, but if courts are slow in America, judge what they must be in Laos-land. Though divorce is so easy, there is less of it than in most heathen countries. A man or woman does not as a rule lightly break the bond of the happy home life.

These customs are existent throughout the length and breadth of the land of the Laos, but in the various provinces there are shades of differences and they must be slightly modified for the official and princely classes.

As neither custom nor climate demand much clothing, a strip of cloth two and a half yards in



EXCHANGING A CHEROOT LIGHT.

length and a yard wide is sufficient dress for a man. This is donned by placing the center of the strip upon the back and bringing the ends to the front of the body. The flowing ends are then loosely twirled together, carried between the legs, up at the back, and the extreme end of the coil is tucked in at the waist line. This forms a graceful trouser arrangement, called *pa toi*. It should fall to the knee when a person is dressed for social life, but the workingman often pulls the cloth up to a mere loin cloth, the tattooing upon his legs serving as a garment. This cloth is cotton or silk, woven solid or in plaids, and the richer the color the better. During the cool season a scarf or blanket is wrapped around the shoulders.

A man's hair is evenly cut and stands up from his head in pompadour style. His ears are pierced and the holes enlarged until the distended lobe will hold a cigarette or a dainty boutonnière. The feet are always bare, and the head uncovered. Usually a bag, very similar to a child's cloth school satchel, is hung from the shoulder. This will contain his betel box, cheroots, copper coins, and a lump of steamed rice rolled up in a green banana leaf. If he be going from village to village, a long knife or sword is suspended from his shoulder. This will be used in countless ways and may be termed a Laos man's pocketknife, only it must also serve as a mean of defense if attacked by wild animals, or a drunken band. The illustration is very typical, save for the exceedingly homely features of the man. Exchanging a cheroot light is a common courtesy

in many localities, though it is considered inelegant in a few centers. Men, women, and children are inveterate smokers of a large cheroot, which is, however, exceedingly mild. The men are always smooth-faced, except for a mustache, as a beard is considered unsightly. Like the Japanese, their skin is remarkably free from hair, and great care is taken to pluck out by the roots with tweezers any hairs that might be so bold as to show themselves.

A woman's dress is almost as simple as that of a man, and may consist solely of a long skirt which falls to the ankle. This is bright in color, always following the same general design in any one province. The fashion in Lakawn and Chieng Mai consists of a broad band of dark brown or red at the bottom; a wider strip, consisting of many narrow stripes of various colors, purple, orange, white, and garnet, being prominent; above this a similar band to that at the bottom, and at the top a white strip of soft goods. This is brought plain from the back and folded in front, the white strip being used to twist and tuck in, thus giving support to the skirt. A bosom scarf may or may not be worn, and in the cool season a jacket made after the Burmese style is sometimes donned, but solely for comfort.

With the Laos, a woman's hair is truly her glory. It is carefully dressed with a comb skillfully made of wood. It is often shampooed with a tea made from the rind of a certain sour orange. This cleanses the scalp and causes a healthy growth. If the hair lacks in natural gloss fresh lard oil is

rubbed on, which gives a luster like unto the raven's wing. If a woman lacks hair, the difficulty is overcome by wearing a switch, which, by the way, is cleverly made. The hair is dressed by tying at the back of the head and coiling into a knot, which is given a turn like the tie of a four-in-hand scarf. This keeps it neatly in place and no pin is needed to secure it. In the distended ear lobe a coil of gold or brass is slipped, according to the woman's means. If these coils are of brass, they are made by coiling tightly a pliable strip about a yard long and an inch in depth. If the material is gold, a hollow cylindrical form is used, the curved sides being covered with a sheet of gold. The ends are then finished off by coiling a gold wire round and round from the center, until the circumference is reached. This gives the ring the appearance of being made as was the brass one and yet maintains a lighter weight, and is less costly.

Black teeth are so highly esteemed that one never sees a white tooth save in the mouth of a very young child. Betel-chewing tends to darken the enamel and *chiit* is carefully rubbed on to intensify the black, for it is a common saying, "Any dog can have white teeth." The betel chew is composed of the areca or betel nut, siri leaf used in a green state, lime mixed with tumeric which forms a pink paste and a pinch of tobacco. Camphor is added if easily obtainable. This combination is chewed as constantly and persistently as is tobacco among the negro men of our Southland. Unweaned children learn to chew it, and men and

women, toothless with age, reduce the ingredients to pulp in a small tube-like mortar, and then complacently munch it. It is a pleasant stimulant, but a very unsightly habit, for the blood-red saliva of chewers stains the roadside, market places, and homes. The betel boxes of the wealthy or well-to-do are made of beaten gold or silver, exquisitely worked. Those of the poorer class are of lacquer ware. It is discourtesy not to offer the betel box to one's Laos guest, and an offense to refuse it, except for a good reason. Foreigners never offend by so doing, if they explain that it is not the custom in their country.

A maiden when fresh from a plunge in the river and dressed in a new skirt and bright scarf is, indeed, comely and fair to look upon. Her shapely form is perfectly and gracefully poised and her head is held in a queenly way. Her hands and feet are small, so that it would be impossible to manacle many of the women. She is not perfumed and painted and adorned as are the Chinese women, neither has she the air of elegant refinement that surrounds a Burmese woman. But she has about her a certain freshness, as though new created, and a naïve manner which is lacking in these other peoples.

In recent years a slight change in dress has come to the chief cities. Formerly the missionaries encouraged all over whom they had an influence to wear a jacket made of white India muslin, which could be obtained in all the markets at low figures. For many years this white jacket was a badge of



"A SLIGHT CHANGE IN DRESS."

Christianity, but gradually its use became more general, and now it is the ordinary thing to see many men and women in the capital, and other cities, attired in such a jacket. Men and women have been patiently taught by the women of the mission to cut, fit, and sew these jackets, and there are now scores of able tailors earning their living by making these garments, and usually upon a good American-make sewing machine.

The homes of this people, though simple, are adapted to their needs. They are built on the following general plan. The owner gets his material together slowly, day by day. Among the poor this is mostly of bamboo; among the well-to-do of teak, or some other hard wood. He measures and cuts the framework and mortises or dovetails the pieces, so that they will fit. When this is accomplished, he invites his friends to come on a certain day to the house-raising; and they come, for it is a gala day. Holes are soon dug to anchor the post pillars, and the framework is quickly fitted together and is in place. Often the floor is laid with *fak* or split bamboo. This is run parallel across the sills until the whole floor surface is covered. The *fak* is then tied to the sills with bamboo withes, which are tough, though pliable, or with rattan. This kind of a floor has considerable spring in it, and forms a fairly comfortable bed for the family when they spread their mats and cotton *salīs* at night.

The walls are next made, usually of split bamboo, woven into a frame which fits into the framework of the house. Thatch is then tied upon the

roof and the house is complete, a house strong enough to withstand the elements, and commodious and comfortable enough for the wants of this people.

But we have overlooked the dinner hour—a very grave blunder. At that time all “knock off” and a sumptuous repast of rice, savory curry, fruits, and sweetmeats is spread at the host’s expense. When the meal is over, betel nut and cheroots are passed and a pleasant hour is spent, smoking, chewing, and chatting, when work is again resumed.

In house-building a few rules have to be observed, such as having the pillars an odd number and the rounds of the ladder leading into the house odd. This is for good luck. Before the crowd disperses, solemn exercises are held over the putting away of the “spirit-house.” This is a tiny house which looks very like a toy house for children. It is made as beautiful as the means of the owner will allow, and is placed sometimes on a post somewhere in the door yard, sometimes upon a sheltered part of the veranda, where food, flowers, and fruit are kept before it for the spirits to feed upon. Evil spirits are supposed to rest in this wee house and leave the family unmolested so long as they do not offend them. With our Christian people there is no spirit-house to be dedicated; but they have a gathering after their houses are completed, and then publicly dedicate the home and all its belongings to God. The service is very pretty and impressive, and in the prayer of consecration all the worldly goods of the man and wife are sometimes enumerated, even to the chickens and fruit groves.



BED, PILLOWS, AND BETEL BOX.

Photograph by the Rev. Hugh Taylor, of Laos Mission.

These houses vary in size, according to the means of the family, but always one general plan is followed. If the house be "one-roof," it consists of one interior room, a wide veranda, partly covered above and at one side, and a wee kitchen at one end of the veranda. If the house be "two-roof," each one of the two sections is built on the same plan. The interior room is used as bedroom, but if the family be large there are often stretched mat screens across the room. But during the hot season the whole family sleeps upon the open veranda, which is at once living room, parlor, and reception room.

The houses of the well-to-do peasant class are made of a teak or other hardwood framework, the walls being of boards or mats, and the roof being either tiled or thatched. The floor is sometimes made of planks, sometimes of *fak*. The palaces of the *chau*, or rulers, are more pretentious.

In Laos houses one finds but little household furnishings. A swinging cradle, a few mats and cotton pads or mattresses for sleeping, pillows, water jars, and cooking vessels being the only essentials. There are no chairs, for it is custom to sit upon the floor. Men sit Turk fashion, but for a woman to do so is evidence of ill-breeding. They seat themselves by dropping deftly upon the knees with the feet together, and letting the body down to one side of the feet. It is a very trying position for a stiff-jointed American, but one which all women who live in the land must adopt unless they offend. When tired of this position, the

women raise the body a little and swing the feet to the other side. It is done so quickly that at first a stranger cannot discern what has been done. If one tires of sitting thus upright, it is perfectly admissible to lean upon one arm, or to rest one elbow upon a cushion.

The kitchen is at one end of the veranda, and is a tiny room, having a large box in the center filled with earth. Thereon are placed stones to support the few crude cooking vessels, consisting usually of a pot for boiling curry and a rice steamer, often made from a bamboo joint. The smoke ascends and creeps through the eaves, leaving behind long black festoons of cobwebs. To one side of the room is a mortar and pestle for pounding curry. Rice is the principal article of food, and is eaten at least three times a day, and three hundred and sixty-five days in the year. It differs from our Carolina rice, being very glutinous and creamy in color. It must be soaked over night in water and washed several times before steaming. When sufficiently cooked, it is poured out upon a mat, and while steaming hot is slightly kneaded into a mass. It is then ready for use, and is eaten by pulling off a lump about the size of an egg, which is mashed in the hand and then dipped into the curry bowl and eaten as a "sop." Curry can be anything from water and red pepper boiled together, to the savory dishes served by that name to visitors at Bangkok or Maulmein. Into the curry pot goes chopped meat, cocoanut milk, vegetables, or if they be lacking, the leaves of vines or bushes flavored

with garlic or onion. The most highly prized ingredient that can be put into curry is called *ha*. It is in plain English, rotten fish, and it smells a little bit worse than a whiff of the far-famed durian. This *ha* is prepared by packing fish away in bamboo joints and allowing it to decompose. So penetrating and offensive is the odor that I have never known more than one foreigner to taste it, and this is how that happened:—

This gentleman was in a village holding services with the few Christian families there, and was invited home by the elder to dinner. When the hour arrived to serve the meal it was spread tastily on a mat upon the floor. Now it happened that this particular missionary could not tell the difference between the odor of a rose and of an onion, and, so, behold him, with keen delight, dipping his rice into the curry and tasting. Ah! but it was delicious! the very best curry he had ever eaten. And so he calls his cook who is along with him, and tells him to note well how the curry was made as he wishes some exactly like it the following week when he shall entertain the native ministers. But to his dismay the curry on that occasion was no better than usual. After his guests had left he went to his cook for explanation, who said, "Why, Father Teacher, you did not want that kind of curry, for it was made with *ha*."

A Laos table is only about two feet in diameter, is round in shape, and is only a few inches from the floor. Beside it is placed the basket of rice and upon it there may be several small bowls of curry,

also fruit and a bit of dried fish, which is daintily partaken of as a relish, or there may be only one bowl of curry. The family gather about the table, or mat, and eat in silence. Food is taken to the mouth with the fingers, and strange as this may seem, it is done with a nicety that forms a striking contrast to the shoveling-like process of some orientals in eating. The well-bred Laos man eats slowly, picking a piece of fish, or taking a bite of banana in between bites of rice and curry. It is the height of impropriety to interrupt a person when eating. Even a *chau* never calls a slave at such a time. If a superior calls not knowing that his servant is eating, that servant will answer, without rising, "*Kin kau yu*," "Eating rice, still," and his answer is entirely acceptable. When the meal is finished the curry bowl is carried to the end of the veranda and washed, and a drink of water is taken before the chew of *miang* is placed in the mouth. *Miang* is a roll of moist, salted tea leaves, which is held in the mouth and slowly chewed. It is the native way of using tea. It is said to be more invigorating than tea-drinking. No drink whatever is partaken of during meals.

One can readily see that there would be no wearing out of nerves over housekeeping in the Laos country. The floor is swept when it is in crying need thereof, and a few whisks of the broom sends dirt and trash skurrying through the cracks in the floor. There are no family wash days. When a garment is soiled the owner carries it to the river when he or she goes to bathe and beats it clean

against a tree trunk or boat side. There is no spring house-cleaning, but when the annoying *cimex lectularius* becomes a pest, the cotton *salis* are thrown out into the noonday sun, and the walls and floors are vigorously beaten and swept, and sometimes scalded with boiling water. When the walls become soiled or decayed, they are torn off and new ones take their place. Peaceful dust is allowed to accumulate, and dirt is left undisturbed. Thus much disease is harbored and spread, and the great prevalence of such diseases as smallpox and leprosy can be readily accounted for. Though the solitudes and cares that come with a high civilization are unknown to this people, so, also, are its comforts and its joys.

CHAPTER IX

CHAUS AND SERFDOM

IN an old Book we are taught that he that is chief, or great, should be as he that serves, but the Laos have a very different idea of greatness. With them, to be great, is to receive much service, not render it, and so we find the *gens de condition* reclining in ease and luxury, while a patient, long-suffering people serve them with their best.

All the peasant class are in a manner serfs, for they are attached to some *chau* to whom they look for protection, and to whom in return they render a certain amount of labor. This *corvée* is not a burden among the Laos as it is with Siamese, for no tax is levied in lieu of it, nor is so much time demanded. Often a man may go for several years without being called out for labor. Probably the reason for this, aside from the usually clement disposition of the *chaus*, is that a peasant can at any time he may wish change his protector without a change of residence. Thus a kind and genial *chau* will gather about himself a large following of peasants upon whom he can exact *corvée* at any desired time, while an over-exacting and ill-tempered one will be left with only his slaves.

The wealth of the *chaus* is very great, but it is not derived from taxation. It is partly hereditary in the form of rice plains, fruit groves, valuable for-

ests, and gems and golden vessels. This accumulated wealth is never expended, for, if a *chau* wishes, for instance, carriers to take him across the mountains to visit a neighboring province he levies *corvée* upon a score of his serfs. If he wishes to build a new apartment to his palace, it is done in a similar manner; and so whatever labor and service is needed can be had without compensating.

According to the wealth and power of a *chau* is the number of slaves he owns; this number may vary from a dozen to even a thousand or more. These may be slave-born, or purchased, or war captives. They may live either within the palace of the *chau*, or in some outlying village, where they make their own living and are at liberty, save that they must always hold themselves in readiness to answer the call of their lord for an hour's service or a month or more. Many of the peasants become slaves from debt. They borrow money to pay their government taxes, and then almost inevitably fail to meet their debt, and so become the property of the *chau*. There is no real excuse for this, as taxes are low. Slaves can purchase their freedom, but so little money is in circulation that it is a very difficult thing to do. Slavery has become a problem in official circles, as in recent years his majesty has issued an edict proclaiming that from the date of the edict all children born of slaves should be free. The difficulty arises from the circumstances which make enforcement of the law dependent upon the very men against whom it works.

The whole class of monks, from the youngest novitiate to the abbot, is exempt from *corvée*. One may see that the only really free persons in the kingdom of Siam are the monks and his majesty the king. For the slaves crouch to their masters; the peasants look to their liege lords; judges look to the local *chaus*; while the local *chau* bows lowly to the head *chau* of the province known as the governor. The governor may proudly rule over his province, but he becomes meek when the Siamese high commissioner appears. And this same commissioner that holds his head so high when in the province has to hold his place at the mere will or pleasure of his majesty.

The ruling class of Laos have a dignity and refinement of manner that would be for them a passport into the elegant society of any capital city. They are not cold and conservative, but are interested in people and affairs of the world, and are very eager to adopt western civilization. Yet, in a way, they are a selfish, self-seeking class, and have not the interest of their people at heart. They live solely for gain and pleasure; pleasure and gain. Exceptions only prove the rule. These are men who have a real zeal for the advancement of their people, and call to our minds the lines,

"We thank thee, Lord, that thou hast made joy to abound,
That in the darkest spot of earth some love is found."

Usually the *chaus* have several wives and a harem, but not always. The *Chau Haw Nā* of Lakawn married a woman who equaled him in

rank. She objected to a second wife, so there has never been one.

The parasitical life of the *chaus* upon the peasants is the cause of a state of stagnation. Here we have a rich, tropical country, and a people fairly industrious, and pastoral in their instincts and habits, yet the land is undeveloped, and the people are in a state of lethargy. A few instances will illustrate more fully this state of affairs.

A man from a neighboring village came to the Lakawn Dispensary for medicines. When told the price, a mere nominal one, he replied, "*Paw Liang*,* I shall have to beg this medicine, for I have not an *att* with which to pay you."†

"Very well," came the reply; "but you can bring in some bananas next time you come; my wife will buy them from you, and you can then pay for your medicine."

"No, I have no bananas."

"Is that so?" said the doctor; "why, you had a fine banana grove when I was last at your village. Well, then, bring some cocoanuts and my wife will buy them. We always want cocoanuts."

"*Paw Liang*, my cocoanut trees are all gone," came the sad reply.

"Why, man! what has become of your trees? I can't understand."

"*Paw Liang*, it is like this. My family never got

* This term means literally, "Father nourisher," and is the name given all mission physicians by the natives.

† An *att* is a copper coin, worth about half a cent.

any good bananas out of that grove or cocoanuts from those trees. *Chau B*— would always send for the first and the best, and in a fit of anger I leveled the whole to the ground.”

The trouble here may be readily appreciated. This man had too strong a spirit of freedom for a Laos. Usually they accept their lot without a thought of complaint or resentment. They seldom ask, Why? but instead make the best of their circumstances, and are only careful not to expend too much time and energy upon anything.

To the north of Lakawn the following incident occurred: A young man by the name of Ai Pat had been industrious and ambitious, and had saved up a little money, amounting to about two hundred dollars of American currency. His parents, then aged and feeble, owned extensive property, highly valued. The homestead was a good teak house, surrounded by fragrant fruit groves. The married daughters had all been settled off in teak houses of their own, with fruit groves and rice plains. Unfortunately a local *chau* heard that Ai Pat had this money. He called upon him and in a gracious way suggested his need of a little ready money. Ai Pat appeared sympathetic, but did not show up his two hundred dollars. The *chau* then spoke more plainly, and said he had heard that Ai Pat had a little money, and he would like to “borrow” it. Ai Pat knew what “borrow” meant, and he clave unto his money, denying that he had it. Had he given it to the prince, there would have been no further trouble. As it was, the prince

stole the money. Just how, I do not remember, but steal it he did and in such a manner as gave clear proof of the deed to all. Ai Pat raged and went to the court. Had he not been crazed with a sense of wrong he would never have done so rash a deed. A Laos child knows that might is right. But the case is in the courts, and it is decided against Ai Pat. It is now time for the *chau* to be angry. Ai Pat's case has been one of insubordination, revolt against authority. It must be dealt with. And so he sends for a man skilled in the art of dealing with witchcraft. He is given his cue, and behold! in a few days, the neighbors declare that the women of Ai Pat's family are witches, that he was born of a witch, and that it was by exercising this power that the family had accumulated their great wealth; that had they not been witches, they would never have been so bold and impudent as to accuse a *chau* of theft; that certain persons in the village had been killed by them; that others were now sick, and so on, until one fair, sunny day the community arose as a man and with sticks and stones and curses drove the whole family from the village. They escaped with their lives, but barely, and the father was unable to travel. So Ai Pat made as though he were going to the north, but by a skillful night movement evaded the spies and got to the river with his father, where he cut bamboo poles, bound them into a raft, placed his father upon it, and brought him downstream, stopping at the landing of the Lakawn Mission Hospital. The family had no connection with the mis-

sion, but Ai Pat had heard of it, and he fled to its open doors. He then returned to the band of homeless wanderers, helpless men, women, and children, and together they went to the far north of the Chieng Mai province to a village, where there is a large number of Christians, and where he knew that they would be befriended and helped to start life again. The old homestead that they were driven from was burned to the ground, and the fruit groves leveled. A large grove of tall areca palms was cut until not one tree was left to tell the story. I stood upon the spot a few weeks after the day of this crime, and can attest that never before did destructionists so completely accomplish their task.

The homes of the married sisters were also burned, and all the rice plains of the family were claimed by the *chau*. You ask if there is no power to investigate, to rectify, and I reply that *this* is the power.

Thus one can see how all ambition and industry is nipped in the bud. So long as one remains content and passive, life goes happily for him, but let him beware and refrain from all upward striving.

There is a common saying that, The witches make the best Christians, and there is more than a grain of truth in the saying, for the majority of witches are so branded, for reasons similar to the instances cited, and are industrious, ambitious people. Under Siamese law they cannot be further persecuted when they become Christians, or rather cannot be lawfully persecuted. So Christian homes

are noted for their cleanliness, order, and simple evidences of thrift; this, because of the excellent combination of the natural instincts with the revolutionary power of their new faith.

At one time we had hired a new man for watchman. The second day he came in hurriedly, dropped to his knees, and begged us to forgive him, but he would have to leave us at once as *Chau B*— had called him for *corvée*, and he must go that very minute.

My family wash was always done in a laundry-shed in the back yard. I had noticed at several different times on ironing days, that there were jackets on the line that were not mine, but had supposed that they belonged to my washerwoman. One day I happened to pass near them and observed that they were trimmed with costly lace. I inquired as to whom they belonged, and after much questioning found that they were the property of a young princess whom I knew to be very wealthy. "What does she give you for this work?" I asked. "Oh, nothing at all. She just tells me that I do this for her now, and that any time that I get into trouble and go to her, that she will help and befriend me." This same princess was very friendly with the ladies of our mission, and would often send us tokens of her friendship and esteem, after the custom of the land. Before we would know that melons were ripe, a large basketful would come down from her. The same as to custard apples in their season, immense savory ones, such as we never saw elsewhere. The rice that she sent was like

unto none other, so sweet was it to the taste. Truly, the first and the best of the land is theirs!

When not appearing before the public eye, the *chaus* live as simply as do the peasant class, eating rice and curry and dressing in next to nothing. But when dressed for a gala occasion they are elegantly and richly attired, the oriental love of color and show being allowed full play. They move about with large retinues, and have carried before them their gold betel set consisting of several pieces, gold flower stands filled with fragrant blooms, and pillows or cushions embroidered in gold and silver threads, upon which they may rest an elbow when seated. Laos *chaus*, like Siamese royalty, present a most imposing appearance when before the public eye. Grand displays of the princely class are very gratifying to the peasants. It inspires them with a feeling of national pride. Besides, at all public occasions, the *chaus* throw money to the crowd, and entertain the people with free displays, theatrical in nature, with dancing, music, and pugilistic contests, sword dances, and such popular amusements. After a day so spent a peasant will stretch himself upon his mat at night, and feel that, after all, his liege lord is the best man on earth, and that he had been very mean and ungrateful to begrudge to him those cocoanuts he had sent for last week.

When Prince Dămrōng, Minister to the Interior, and brother to the king, made a tour of the Laos provinces in 1898, a change swept over the nobility of the land like a whiff of ozone. Before his com-



PEASANTS GOING TO MARKET.

ing not a *chau* was idle, but all with one accord were seeing to the brushing up of their palaces, the improvement of roads, building of bridges, the putting away of fraud and dark records into corners where they tremblingly prayed that they might not be uncovered. Court records were overhauled, accounts balanced, jails looked into, and a general house-cleaning of the land gone through with, so that when at last he stood in the Laos country he beheld her in her reception gown. But he was not deceived, for Prince Dămrōng is every inch a man, and has real insight into conditions that no amount of veneering can conceal. All who have the welfare of the Laos at heart look to this prince with high hopes. But he struggles against fearful odds, for his love of order and punctuality and routine and good government brings upon his head the bitter enmity of some of his compeers at the capital.

The ancient Laos laws, as they are written in the statute books, are good and just, the administration of them is what is unfair and burdensome. Colquhoun puts it aptly when he gives as the diplomatic receipt the following:—

“Delay, delay, delay again and again and if pressed, ask as a last resource, for the advice of the person who is pressing you; then say that you must refer it to headquarters; and thus keep the ball rolling, until he, perhaps, gives it up, in despair of ever getting to the bottom of your diplomacy.”

It is openly acknowledged that bribery is in order, and the people have come to look upon it as

one of the necessary and right adjuncts of a case. Crime is comparatively rare, and capital punishment is seldom inflicted. The severest penalty next to beheading is condemning the offender for life to the cutting of grass for elephants.

At present this condition of affairs is in a transition state. The king, through his commissioners, is abolishing the old code of laws and placing in their stead the Siamese code, which is founded upon the common law of England. The feudal system has been broken, so far as a royal decree can abolish an institution venerable with age. But, like the decrees against slavery, time will be required to make them a power. A poll tax has been levied and other changes made, all of which mark the beginning of better days for the future. The present, however, feels only the unrest of the change.

"Your sins have withholden good from you."

has been verified in this little land. The secret of the national sorrows of this people are all found in that one word of three letters, s-i-n. The rulers sin when judged by their own standards and code of morals, and they know that they sin, yet they blush not, but hug their sins the closer. Woe be to the nations who know not the Lord!



A MARKET SCENE.

CHAPTER X

CHARACTERISTICS AND AMUSEMENTS

THERE is a Buddhist maxim that says: "It is a sin in laughing to raise the voice." This seems to be the keynote for conversation as well. A Chinese market place will well-nigh drive a foreigner crazy by the babel of tongues, high-pitched voices, and too often of a contentious nature. Siamese markets are not so bad, and Laos markets are quiet and orderly. In the immense market of Chiang Mai where men, women, and children are bartering, buying, and selling, one seldom hears a high voice or excited tones. There is a low murmur of voices, like the rippling of a hidden brook, broken here and there by a merry, gentle laugh. An American can go through this market at the busiest time, about two hours after sunrise, can bargain and buy and return home with nerves as perfectly tuned as when he left.

Markets are an interesting phase of Laos life. In the larger cities there are always market stalls which are open all day. These stalls are like those which tourists see in the native quarters of all oriental ports, consisting of a room opening at the front upon the street. The purchaser standing in the street can view the whole stock in hand. The family of the proprietor of the establishment lives in a room at the rear. Or more correctly, they live

in the shop and sleep in the rear. But the vast majority of the markets are portable. In the early dawn, women, with a sprinkling of men, can be seen coming from all directions toward the market street. Across the shoulders is laid a highly polished strip of bamboo, from which hangs at each end a basket. These baskets are lined up down the center or at the sides of the street, their owners squatting beside them. The women are carefully dressed, and their smiling faces and gracefully adjusted scarfs suggest that their trade is not a sordid task, but a most agreeable occupation. There is much color about the scene, for scarfs, skirts, and *pa tois* are bright, and the coal-black, neatly-dressed hair of the women glances like silver as it catches the sunlight. There is much chatting, pleasant passing of jokes, and exchange of news. But when the sun has climbed up some three hours into the heavens the group is scattered, the women hurrying home to their household cares and their children. A group of dogs and a flock of crows soon remove every trace of the bright busy scene of a few minutes ago. All towns do not have a daily market, but have one every other day or twice a week or every five days.

A stranger will say to a Laos: "Why do you do that?" and he will reply: "Because it is our custom." The answer is entirely satisfactory to him. There could be no stronger reason for action. To illustrate. Every man, woman, and child in the country, from the palace to the hut, upon arising in the morning, walks to the water jar at the end of the

veranda and, picking up the cocoanut dipper, rinses out the mouth, usually gargles the throat and then takes a heavy draught. I have never found a person who could give a reason for this save that "It is our custom." They do not realize that they are thereby complying with one of the best of hygienic laws. "It is our custom," and they have never given the matter a thought back of that. So long have they walked with veneration in the ways of their fathers that custom has become to them a god. Yet, this being true, they are not conservative like the Chinese. Their veneration of the past seems to be born of isolation more than of a desire to preserve what is established. It might be termed a negative conservatism, while that of the Chinese is active, positive. But even then, one can readily see that the condition would lull to sleep inventive genius and progress.

A mission teacher once asked a boy what was his idea of heaven. He thought a minute and then replied: "It is like this. A large shade tree that casts a cool shadow under which I can lie and have some one fan me, and bring me water and wait on me generally." Then he added after a moment's thought, "And you know, I must have nothing whatever to do." A wise man has said that, "Goodness without self-sacrifice is not a virtue." Then this people is certainly not very virtuous, for little or no self-sacrificing is done. The child's idea of heaven is the wish of every heart for this life as well. Yet, the people are open-hearted, there being few really destitute poor in

the land. Orphans are always gladly taken into the hearts and homes of some family. There are few beggars, except lepers, which class is generously provided for by alms. I knew of one beggar, a blind boy. The case was investigated and it was discovered that his daily collection of pennies and food was supporting three large families in idleness. I am glad to say that these families were not of the peasant class, but were slaves settled off to earn their own livelihood.

One would expect to find in a simple people like the Laos a love of amusement, but there is not the passion for it that exists among the Siamese. There are many great national rejoicings throughout the year. The New Year festival which falls about the time of Easter each spring is not only observed by the Laos and Siamese, but also by Cambodians and Peguans. They give up three days to the rejoicing, which consists of works of *merit*, merrymakings and pleasures of various kinds. Gambling is indulged in freely by all, for there is full license to engage in it, the gambling farmers having no power to interfere. So completely is the land given over to observing these days that as many more are required afterwards for the people to recover from the effects of their dissipation. At this time the temples are thronged with men and women bringing offerings of fruit, food, and clothing to the monks. Many of the *chaus* have special entertainments at their palaces, providing amusements of various kinds for the people and making special offerings to the monks who grace the occasion. The

king himself observes these holidays with much ceremony, and he has stationed about his city walls companies of monks who perform exorcisms in concert. On the night of the second day, the 15th of the moon, guns, large and small, are fired from the walls at certain intervals all night long, this, for the purpose of driving away evil spirits and to assure blessings during the coming year.

These holidays end among the Laos with water-pouring or throwing, which is symbolical of felicity and blessings. Children gather about their parents and the eldest pours upon their heads perfumed water. This is also done to the venerable personages of the village or town and to the *chaus*. They oftentimes step down into the river, there having the water poured over them. The young people indulge in a frolic of water-throwing. They make squirt guns of bamboo by means of which they can shoot water upon wayfarers. If a person be nicely dressed special attention is paid to him.

The *Loy Katong* holidays occur in the fall after the crops are harvested, and would be a very beautiful custom if it could be disentangled from the superstition which gives it birth. The holiday consists in sending adrift upon streams tiny craft of all kinds, brilliantly illumined with tapers, these as an offering to the water spirits. The crafts usually contain flowers, rice, tapers, sweetmeats, incense sticks, and such things. Much time is necessary to prepare the little craft for their brief journey. They are carefully made from the stalk of banana plants, and are sometimes a foot in length, and

again several feet. The larger the stream and more numerous the population, the more imposing is the display. At the large cities, as Bangkok and Chiang Mai, night is turned into day by the brilliant display. At the palace several royal barges, fashioned after dragons, are sent downstream on one side and are then slowly towed up on the other. A specially acceptable offering at this time is the bloom of the sacred lotus set thickly with burning tapers. Altogether, the scene is bewitchingly beautiful.

The end of the three months of the Buddhist Lent is also an occasion of much rejoicing and many festivities. The whole nation is then intent upon *merit*-making. *Chaus* make visits to the various monasteries, with much ceremony and display, and the peasants flock there with their simple offerings of food and flowers and yellow robes. The sacredness of a temple ground does not exclude merrymaking, dancing, and music, and just without the walls there is liquor and gambling. And so ends the Buddhist Lent.

There are other national holidays, chief of which is his majesty's birthday. And there are scores of provincial holidays; and each *chau* of high rank sees to it that he frequently gives a gala day of some sort for his peasant dependents. It is well to add that by this magnanimity the *chau* lays up for himself *merit* and expects to receive manifold returns in his next incarnation.

One of the most popular forms of amusement is the theater called *lakawn*. It is very different from

an American theater in almost every respect. First, there is no admittance fee. Every palace has its theatrical troupe, and performances are given to entertain guests and to pass away a dull evening. Reserved seats to the front are for the guests, but the populace can crowd and squeeze into the rear until there is not an inch of unoccupied space left. There is little stage setting, and one is reminded of the early days of stage life in London, when it was necessary to placard different parts of the stage, "This is a house," or "Here is a street." The plays are long and would tire an American to distraction, but not so a Laos. Much of the acting is done to music, accompanied by the chant of women's voices. Very unlike our early drama, the actors are exclusively women, who are trained for their part from earliest childhood, so that by the time they reach their teens they are capable of bending and twisting their joints in a most alarming manner, which would be quite enviable to a "double-jointed" American. The best-trained actors in the nation are, of course, found in the palace in Bangkok. All other troupes are trained and modeled after this one. Let us look at some of the dancing there as seen by an eye-witness, an English lady, who lived in the palace as governess for many years:—

"All day long the girls are seen exercising. Some are poised on tiptoe, others bending their arms and limbs back as far as they will reach, and again picking up bits of straw with their eyelids. This very curious and subtle feat can be learned only by very young girls, who are made to practice it in

order to render them flexible in every part of the body.

"There are two long rows of benches, one a little higher than the other. On the lower are placed a row of little girls, very scantily dressed, and on the other bench are laid finely-polished bits of straw. At the sound of a drum the little girls all together bend back their heads and necks until they touch the bits of straw, and which with wonderful dexterity they secure between the corners of the eyelids. It often takes a young girl three or four years of constant practice to acquire this peculiar flexibility of form and movement.

"Among others the cup dance is the most graceful and poetic of their dances. A row of young women, with a tier of cups on their heads, take their place in the center of the gymnasium. A burst of joyous music follows. On hearing this they simultaneously, with military precision, kneel down, fold their hands, bow until their foreheads almost touch the polished marble floor, keeping their cups steadily on the tops of their heads by some marvelous jerk of the neck. Then, suddenly springing to their feet, they describe a succession of rapid and intricate circles, keeping time with the music with their arms, head, and feet.

"Next follows a miracle of art, such as may be found only among people of the highest physical training. The music swells into a rapturous tumult. The dancers raise their delicate feet, curve their arms and figures in seeming impossible flexures, sway to and fro, like withes of willow, agi-

tate all the muscles of the body like the flutter of leaves in a soft evening breeze, but still keep the tier of cups on their heads. These to the looker-on present the strange appearance of gliding about the dancers' arms and limbs as they float about the room."*

The plays are interspersed with dancing of the order described above. The music is furnished by an orchestra composed of drums, cymbals, tom-toms, gongs, bamboo dulcimers, and other stringed instruments. These are played in tuneful harmony, which can be swelled to a burst of sound at the various crises of the play or dance. The repetition of the tune becomes very monotonous to a foreigner long before the play is half over. Often the plays are taken from old Hindoo myths and require several nights to complete the story. Of late it has become very popular to assume the *rôle* of an European or American, and in a good-natured but pointed way expose their eccentricities and humorous characteristics, much to the amusement and satisfaction of the audience.

In the summer of 1898 it was noised in official circles that his majesty was contemplating a visit to the provinces in the near future, probably the following year. This was exciting news, and the *chaus* began at once to prepare for his coming. The following occurred in the Lakawn province, and I understood that Lakawn was one with all the other provinces in the matter:—

* Mrs. Leonowens, in *The Inner City*.

Spies were sent out by the governor to spot pretty girls from four years up to ten or twelve. They were followed by decoys, who were skilled in their art. The trap was laid according to conditions. Sometimes a brightly-colored picture, showing the fame their child would bring to them, would be all that was necessary to win the parents' consent that the child be taken to the palace. Again, a few rupees, with a promise that others should follow would seal the bargain. In other cases it was necessary to intimidate. The latter was nearly always successful. But usually parents were loth to give up their wee girls to a life of sin and sorrow. They knew that at first there would be fame and the applause of man, but in a few more years they would be pushed aside, old, worn-out, and crushed.

The cry that went up over the land was pitiful and heartrending. Pleas were sent in from villages for the mission school to be opened at once so that the girls could be sent to its sheltering walls. Mothers came begging that we would intercede and get their children from the palace for them, and went away bitter in heart when it was explained to them that we could do nothing in the matter. Touring in the heathen villages had to be temporarily suspended, as an audience could not be gathered. And so sorrow and distraction reigned until a sufficient number of girls had been found to gratify lust or pride of the *chau*, and cause him to rest easy, knowing that his *danseuses* would be unrivaled in the provinces.

One of the most glaring characteristics to a pass-

er-by is the Laos love of games of chance. It is excelled only by the passion of the Siamese for the same thing. The last copper coin will be staked upon the result of a cockfight, of a boat race, a boxing match, a kite-flying contest, or, in short, all actions or games wherein there is an element of chance. It is not considered immoral for a man to bet in such contests, but a woman is ostracized by her sex for so doing.

There is a popular game called *ba taw*. It is played by men with a light wicker ball, which is hollow. The ball is tossed in air and kept there by the players kicking it with the foot, preferably with a backward movement. The hand must never be used, but the head and shoulders can come into play. There is no scoring of points and the players may leave the circle at will and others join it. The "fancy kicking" of expert players is very graceful, and interesting to spectators.

The footfall of this people is unusual. It is so light that a man's approach is seldom discerned by a foreigner, until a soft characteristic cough announces his presence. They can creep through the forest like an Indian. I have often watched them when we would be camped in the forest, and wondered how it was possible to step upon dried twigs and leaves and yet make no sound. They pass many a joke among themselves at the way foreigners hunt, pushing through the undergrowth like a "mad boar," and then being disappointed when only bears or wild cattle are sighted, when a deer or tiger was wanted.

Many of the men are exceptionally deft with their fingers in carving wood. The woodwork about the palaces is elaborately carved, and about the peasant homes one often finds gems of carved work, such as handles to dippers and bamboo shoulder strips for supporting baskets. Often a man can be seen carving a stick, which is held firmly by his toes. Both men and women are clever in picking up things with their toes, though it is ill-bred to refer in any way to the feet or call attention to them. An object is never kicked except in anger or contempt. This follows from the custom of going with bare feet, nevertheless the feet are usually clean, as the first thing a person does upon entering a house is to go to the water jar and pour water over his feet.

All Shans are noted for their geniality and courteous welcome to strangers and visitors, and especially so are the Laos Shans. The homes are always open, and a genuine welcome is extended. At one harvest season, I asked my neighbor how much rice he put away in his bin for use during the year. I expressed surprise at the quantity, and he explained that his family alone could use only a little more than half that quantity, but so many were always coming and going that the whole amount was consumed in the year. The cleanest mat is always spread for the visitor, the best in the home is placed at his disposal, and on the morrow as he is ready to depart, the host will raise his folded hands to his brow and utter softly the word *chün*, "invite," and in peace the guest goes on his way.

CHAPTER XI

LANGUAGE AND A TRIO OF UNIQUE CUSTOMS

TONAL languages are interesting to us, not alone for their musical sound, but because they are built upon entirely different principles from ours. In the Laos tongue there are no inflections, as there is almost no distinction of form to represent person, number, mood, or tense. The article is wholly lacking, its place being supplied when necessary by *ni*, "this"; or *năn*, "that." There is no plural of nouns, it being necessary to add a numeral to mark the distinction, namely: *gnoar* is "cow." To express the plural, one must say *gnoar sǐ toar*, "cows, four bodies"; or if indefinite number is meant, *gnoar lai toar*, "cows, many bodies." There is no conjugation of the verb save by auxiliaries, and these auxiliaries are also in use as independent words. There is no declension of nouns, but cases are defined by the relative position of the word in the sentence. There is a glaring lack of connective participles, and the simple conjunction "and" is very sparingly used.

But in the above does not lie the chief difficulty to a foreigner of mastering the language. Instead, it is in the fact that the language, like the Chinese is tonal, *i. e.*, words otherwise identical are given a different meaning by a change in tone. Add to this the ear distinction between an aspirate consonant

and an unaspirate, and then the nicer distinction between a long and a short vowel, and we have a language to acquire which one must depend upon the ear almost as much as upon the mind. The difficulty of distinguishing words is not so great as that of trying to reproduce them. It is a common mistake for a newcomer to order his hostler to "saddle my dog," or for a mistress to bid her maid "go sell the door." Such blunders may be very serious, as, for instance, in the case of the minister who, in reading the lesson for the day, said, "Knock, and it shall be sold unto you"—or the other minister who intended to teach a band of catechumens to sing, "We are the Lord's," but discovered afterwards that he had sung instead, "Our pigs are the Lord's."

There are forty-eight consonants in the language, part of which are high and part low and four irregular. There are vowels which combine with these. They are combined in numerous ways to form words, and their number multiplied into the thousands by the use of tones. There are, in all, eight tones; the low explosive, straightforward, falling, emphatic, circumflex, high explosive, rising, depressed, and short-circumflex. The last tone is the most difficult to imitate; and it is the added tone which the Siamese do not have in their vernacular.

The words are monosyllabic, except those which are derived from the Pali. There is a nice distinction in the use of pronouns as regards the social standing of persons referred to. A person addresses

his equal with one pronoun, his superior with another, and his inferior with still another. A foreigner thus often offends unintentionally in speaking to a *chau*, or officer, as though he were a slave. There is as great a distinction between the vocabulary applicable to peasant life, and that of the court as exists between that of a college-bred man and of a country schoolboy. There are, also, found many differences of dialect in adjacent provinces; but it is generally conceded that the language at the capital, Chieng Mai, is the purest, and should be the standard for the whole.

There are many words and expressions which are poetically pariphrastic. The word for content is "good heart," anxiety being "hot heart." The will is called "heart water," and thunder is "sky calling." To eat a meal is referred to as "eating rice"; and death by the Christian natives, as "God has called."

There is a nicety of distinction in words which reveals the exact relationship of the person referred to. If, for instance, one asks, "Have you a sister?" the reply will be, "I have an older sister," or, "I have a younger sister," as the case may be. Or if one refers to an aunt, the listener knows at once whether the aunt is on the maternal or paternal side.

In proper names there is little difference made between the choice of names for girls and boys. A baby girl may be fondly named *Di*, "good," and in the next house the wee boy may bear the same name. If a baby is very red in infancy it is dubbed

Deng, "red," irrespective of sex, or if it is unusually dark it is called *Dăm*, "black." There is a prefix to names which distinguishes sex, but that will be spoken of later. One peculiar name for a child is *La*, "last." When parents think that they have a sufficiently large family they will name the baby *La*, and think the matter is settled. So one is often surprised to see *La* washing the face of her younger sister and swinging the cradle of her baby brother at the same time.

There are three Laos customs which deserve special mention for their uniqueness. They are the systems of prefixes to proper names, tattooing, and cremation. We will refer to them in their order.

As there are no surnames and a limited number of given names the matter of identifying a person simply by the name is impossible. That does not necessarily distinguish even the sex. So a method of prefixes is resorted to, which at any rate is ingenious, and in a measure modifies the difficulty. All boys bear the prefix *Ai* to their name until they enter the temple life, when it is dropped. If a man never enters the temple he always remains an *Ai*. If a lad leaves the temple before he is twenty, he has the title *Noi* prefixed to his name, and is considered a fairly well-educated person, for he can read and write, and knows a few Pali words. Or if he should remain until after he is twenty the title *Nan* is given, and he is looked upon with esteem by his fellow-villagers. Thus the mere mention of a name designates his degree of education, so far as the slight knowledge taught may be termed

“education.” Elderly men are called *Lūng*, and it is proper to call such a person either by his name prefixed by *Lūng*, or by his title prefixed by the same, for instance, either *Lūng Keo*, or *Lūng Nan Keo*, is correct.

It is obvious that even with this aid of prefixes, a man’s identity may be obscure, so it is customary to add the village or occupation of a man after his name.

The names of women are prefixed in a similar manner, only the change has to do with age, and differs somewhat in various provinces. The general rule is the same. Little girls are called *Ī*, and young women *Nang*. Married women are *Ui*, and elderly women *Me Tau*, literally, “mother old.” The term is one of greatest respect. As there are no surnames, of course, by marriage, there is no change of name of either party.

Tattooing is a custom that savors strongly of the barbarous, but one which is a badge of respectability and manhood among the people. Nearly every man has his body tattooed from the waist line to the knee or a little above or below the knee: and in a very few localities from the neck to ankle. The design varies with the locality or clan, and a native can tell by the general design where a man hails from. Sometimes the design is wrought in parallel, horizontal bands, again in conventional designs, again in figures of apes, elephants, or such creatures, the intervening space being filled with tracery, and still again in solid color, the whole resembling at a distance a pair of dark knee trous-

ers. The origin of this custom is unknown, though many believe it to have been a kind of charm to make their bodies invulnerable. Certainly the following story taken from the *Pongsa Wadan*, or history of Siam, supports that surmise:—

“In the year of the Cock, 1019 (A. D. 1658), the King of Siam hearing wonderful tales about France from a French ship captain, determined to send an embassy there, which only escaped being devoured by a whirlpool through their magician raising a wind which carried the vessel out of its gaping mouth. When the ambassadors arrived, they told the story of the adventure to the French king. Sometime after this, the king sent for the ambassadors to come into the royal presence. He then ordered a company of five hundred French soldiers, all good marksmen, to be drawn up and placed in two ranks, directly facing each other—two hundred and fifty on each side. They fired simultaneously, and each man on either side lodged his ball in the barrel of the gun in the hands of the man opposite to him without a single failure.

“The king then asked them if they had any as good soldiers, sharpshooters, as these in Siam? The chief ambassador answered that the King of Siam did not esteem this kind of skill in the art as worth much in war. When the French king heard this he was displeased, and asked them what kind of skill in soldiers did the King of Siam value? The ambassador answered: ‘The King of Siam admires soldiers who are well skilled in the magic arts, and such as, if good marksmen like your

majesty's soldiers here would fire at them, the balls would not touch their bodies. His majesty, the King of Siam, has some soldiers who can go unseen into the midst of the battle, and cut off the heads of the officers and men in the enemies' ranks and return unharmed. He has others who can stand under the weapons of the enemy to be shot at, or pierced with swords and spears, and yet not receive the least wound or injury. Soldiers skilled in this kind of art, the King of Siam values very highly and keeps them for use in the country.'

"The King of France did not believe this story, and remarked that the Siamese ambassadors were boasting beyond all reason. The king then demanded if they had any soldiers skilled in this kind of art along with them in the ship and could they give him a specimen of their art?

"The ambassadors answered, 'The soldiers we have along for use in the vessel are but common soldiers; but we can give your majesty a specimen of their skill.' The king asked, 'What can they do?' The ambassador said, 'I beg your majesty to arrange this company of five hundred soldiers—sharpshooters—in a position far off and near as you please to fire at my soldiers, and they will ward off the bullets, and not suffer a single one to touch them.'

"When the King of France heard this proposal, fearing lest his soldiers should kill the Siamese, and thereby destroy the treaty of friendship about to be formed between them, he was unwilling to make the trial. The ambassador then answered:

'Your majesty need not fear in the least. My soldiers really have an art by which they can ward off the bullets, and not suffer one of them to touch them. If it please your majesty, then, to-morrow let them prepare a platform here having an awning of white cloth, and surrounded with flags, and place upon the platform some refreshments and wine; then spread the word, and let all the people of the town come to witness my feat.'

"The king then prepared all these things as was requested. The following day the ambassador requested his magic teacher to select and prepare sixteen persons and clothe them entirely with the panoply of figures (tattooing) for making the persons invulnerable—the teacher and all together seventeen persons. When everything was ready they came into the presence of the king and took seats upon the platform. He then addressed the king: 'If it please your majesty, let these five hundred sharpshooters shoot these seventeen persons seated upon the platform.' The king then commanded the soldiers to fire.

"The French soldiers then fired several rounds, some at a distance and some near, but the powder would not ignite, and their guns made no report. Those seventeen persons, uninjured, partook of the refreshments upon the platform without the least fear or confusion. The French soldiers were wonderfully surprised and startled. The magic teacher then said: 'Don't be discouraged; fire again. This time we will allow the guns to go off.' The soldiers then fired another round. Their guns went

off, but the bullets fell to the ground, some near where they stood, some a little distance off, and some fell near the platform, but not a single man was injured.

"When the King of France saw this he believed all the Siamese ambassadors had said, and praised their arts very much, remarking he had never seen anything to equal it. He then presented the Siamese soldiers with money and with clothes as a reward, and also feasted them bountifully. From this time forward the king believed everything the ambassadors said. He did not doubt a single word."*

This may not be satisfactory to our practical unimaginative minds, but it is fully so to this credulous, poetic people. In reality, the tattooing is begun soon after a youth has entered his teens and marks a transition from youth to young manhood. It is done in patches, as the operation is tedious and painful, it being necessary to drug the patient with an opiate. Death often results from the operation or, more correctly, from the overdrugging. The pain is referred to with manly indifference, and a youth is careful to adjust his *pa toi* so as to reveal the patches already tattooed.

The method of tattooing varies with the locality, but there are two schools which have the predominance. With one of these, the outline is traced with a delicate hair pencil. "The pattern is then tattooed in by a series of closely adjoining punc-

* From Colquhoun's *Amongst the Shans*.

tures made by a long, pointed style, with a weight at the top, worked with the right hand, and guided by the left, which rests on the patient's body, with the forefinger and thumb so joined as to form a sort of groove for the style to work in. The style is of brass, and consists of three or four portions, the bottom piece, which is solid, is pointed like an ordinary lead pencil, and divided by two slips at right angles to each other, carried up for about three inches from the point; these are fine near the point, and about one-thirty-second part of an inch broad higher up; these slits enable it to retain the coloring matter. The next joint, or two joints if there be four, is a hollow tube, and the last is either solid, or has a brass weight at the upper end, sometimes plain and sometimes fashioned like a bird or animal, in order to give weight to the tool." The coloring matter is lampblack, mixed with cocoanut oil or water.

The other method is performed by making punctures into the epidermis with a number of small needles bound closely together. The coloring matter is then rubbed upon the surface, the punctures absorbing it permanently, making the design ineffaceable.

This practice is doomed to death in the near future, for already a few youths who have grown up under the influence of Christianity have refused to be tattooed; and this, without any direct teaching on the subject from the missionaries. For it is not the policy of the mission to preach against customs which do not involve morals. It is the Spirit

that quickeneth, and the entrance of his word that giveth life; and with that foundation all the superstructure will, in his own time, be rightly adjusted. and the Laos will understand the meaning of the words of admonition and law unto the Jews that "Ye shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor print any marks upon you."

The third unique custom we will speak of is that of cremation. The disposition of the dead has been of interest to mankind ever since the blow was dealt that severed the soul of Abel from his body. Legion is the name of the various customs that gather about the dead, from the heartless custom of some fetish tribes who simply cast out the body to be devoured by scavengers, to the custom of some other peoples of deifying their dead. The Laos illustrate a mean between these extremes. The custom of wailing for the dead prevails. I shall never forget the first time I heard such wails. We were camped in a village; the evening service was over, and we sat in our tent door wrapped in the white glow of a tropical moonlight, and deep in thought, thoughts that were stirred by the group of heathen men and women who had just dispersed after having heard for the first time of the Way, the Truth, and the Life. The calm was broken suddenly by voices uttering piercing wail after wail, the echoes of which were soon drowned by the mournful howls of dogs in all directions that joined in a chorus. The wails did not cease, and we could see the women rocking to and fro, with heads bowed in their hands, as they uttered sobs and

lamentations, and ever and anon tearing wildly at their hair. The men sat dumb, as though stupefied by their grief, while the children were huddled closely together beside the fire.

The thoughtful and devout always secure the presence of a monk at the deathbed. He recites passages from the sacred books, which few understand, because of their being expressed in Pali instead of the vernacular, and he sprinkles the dying with holy water. This sprinkling is believed to be efficacious in a similar manner to the unction or anointing of the dying by the Roman Catholic priests. But this office is performed not in a true priestly spirit, but is done by the monks for the sole purpose of laying up *merit* for themselves.

If the family of the dead is very poor and cannot afford a cremation, the body is tightly wrapped in a cloth and either laid in a box or tied in a mat. It is then lashed to a pole and is borne to the forest on the shoulders of two men. There a shallow grave is dug, the body buried, and the spot soon forgotten. There is often much ceremony about the dead, such as placing a coin in the mouth for the spirit's use, and food and clothing. The sorrow over the dead is genuine, but not lasting. A mother said to me at one time: "When my baby died, I thought I should die, too, I wished I might die. But my heart is now comforted, and I look back and wonder at my grief."

All persons dying a sudden death, or from a contagious disease, or of bowel complaint, or a woman dying in childbirth, are not allowed crema-

tion. They must be buried. The reason is difficult to understand in its exactness, for we do not see and feel as do this people. But, as best we can express it, they deem that death in such cases was caused by evil spirits, and so reproach is cast upon the victim, and respectable cremation, wherein is *merit*, must be denied them. In these cases, the body is carried to the forest by two men, who are eager for a few coins, and is disposed of in all possible haste.

If the body is to be cremated it is embalmed as soon as life is extinct by a native process, which is simple, but most effectual in its results. The body is then laid in a tight coffin with preservative spices about it. A drip hole is made at the lower end for the remaining fluids of the body to escape, and at the opposite end a small stovepipe arrangement is erected for the escape of fumes and gases. This must be tall enough to reach up through the thatch or tile roof. The coffin is placed usually in a protected part of the veranda. It is covered with gay cloth spangled with tinsel, and surrounded with the deceased's betel set and few private belongings. One or more images of Buddha are placed about, and sometimes lighted tapers. A company of monks come daily to recite passages from the sacred *dhamma*—Buddhist law—and to receive a fee for so doing, termed by themselves as “meritoriously bestowed gifts.” After a few days the presence of the corpse does not cast a shadow over the family life nor does it appreciably taint the atmosphere. The family laugh and chat and plan

for the cremation with genuine interest. This is not an evidence of disrespect to the dead; to the contrary, for every effort is made to give the departed as showy and elaborate a cremation as the purse will allow. The *merit* of so doing is two-fold, and must be shared between the living and the dead, the amount of *merit* being gauged by the outward splendor of the performance.

A *chau* of great wealth often keeps a corpse from one to two years, but ordinarily a few months is as long as the means will admit. All cremations are alike in essentials, the differences consisting in the amount of money expended to make the affair resplendent with oriental glare and glitter. During the time of the lying-in-state of the corpse preparations for the burning are in progress. A catafalque is made of bamboo and other light combustible woods, in height from ten to thirty feet. This is covered gorgeously with cloths, bright paper, tinsel, and gold leaf. In the center is a resting place for the coffin. The placing of the coffin in the catafalque is accompanied by imposing ceremonies by the monks.

No ceremony is looked forward to with more genuine interest and pleasure than a cremation. So an immense crowd gathers, and is entertained alternately with boxing games, cockfights, chanted recitations, accompanied by music and dance, jugglery, side shows, and other such displays of anything but a funereal nature. All the time, relays of monks keep up in soft, musical intonations, the recitation of prayers and part of the *dhamma*, from



A SMALL CATAFALQUE FLOATING TO CREMATION GROUNDS.

which exertion they afterwards recuperate by joining in the festivities. These ceremonies and festivities may last from one day to a week, and then takes place the burning. The catafalque is drawn on a sled to the cremation grounds. The rope is long so that a host can share the *merit* of dragging it away. The rope finally ends in a silken thread, which is held in the hand of the nearest relative of the dead. When the ground is reached more ceremonies are gone through with by the monks. A dozen or more long strips of cloth are gathered at one of their ends into a bunch and thrust into the coffin. The other ends are held by monks, who stand the length of the strip from the coffin in a circle. They chant again their prayers for the dead, and in some mysterious way virtue passes from them to the soul of the departed. And yet Buddhism declares repeatedly that there is no soul, and that man has no abiding principle whatever. Fire is then touched to the catafalque, which blazes up into a mass of flame, and soon reduces the whole to ashes. The assembled group disperses so soon as the "meritorious gifts" are bestowed upon the monks, a few slaves remaining until the fire begins to smolder, and then they retire, and a few half-savage dogs take up the watch, hoping that a bone or so will be left for them. There is no gathering of the ashes into an urn, as among the Siamese, and a few rains soon remove every vestige of all the pomp and display.

These cremations cost anywhere from a few dollars to the incredible sum of four hundred thousand

dollars, as is the case in a royal cremation. The sand bar across the river from the south mission compound in Lakawn was used as a cremation ground by the natives not in the *chau* class. The catafalques were usually floated down the stream upon barges. When the catafalque was simple, it became necessary to make a pyre of wood and place the catafalque upon it. Usually the coffin was removed from the catafalque and placed upon the pyre, when the monks chanted in Gregorian sonorousness their prayers, after which a few rude blows of the ax caused the coffin to fall to pieces, exposing to view the mummied remains, over which was placed the catafalque. Often the fire would be applied by the family. Each bearing a taper, they marched around the pyre and lay their tiny flame upon it. The women often wailed at these ceremonies.

There is a law to protect the smoldering remains, and anyone touching the embers can be heavily fined and imprisoned. The question arises, "Why should a person care to disturb the fire?" the answer to which becomes obvious when it is remembered that coins and jewels are often placed in the coffin for the spirit's use; and, again, because of the length of time such a fire will smolder when a little scattering would soon end its life and put a stop to the exceedingly disagreeable odor which accompanies even the last dying ember.

CHAPTER XII

OCCUPATIONS AND INDUSTRIES

THERE are no great corporations or business centers in the Laos country. Each community is a commonwealth in itself, the inhabitants raising their own rice, fruits, and vegetables, during the rainy season, and during the dry months weaving cloth, molding and baking pottery ware, and carrying on the traffic that is done by caravans of men. Each year traders come down from Yünnan bringing silk and the small wares of China with them on their pack mules, and carrying back dye-woods, gums, stick-lac, gold dust, and copper, but mostly cotton compressed into small packs. It has been estimated that such a caravan composed of some dozen or so of men with some sixty or seventy mules will carry merchandise amounting to some fifteen thousand dollars in value. The usual routes are from Yünnan via Chieng Tung or Chieng Rūng and Chieng Rai, either to Chieng Mai or through Lakawn to Utaradit (Ta It). Among themselves the people are what might be termed a race of traders, not with a show of bustle and enterprise, but in a quiet, unpretentious way. The people manifest skill and fitness to a marvelous degree for this petty trading. The districts rich in tea send the packed leaves on the shoulders of men to the sugar plantations, receiving for their stimulant a

sweet in return. Certain villages make better pottery ware than others because of the more excellent quality of their clay so they exchange their pots and jars for cotton and tobacco. One would readily see that this is a very primitive mode of trade, as little or no money is used as a medium of exchange. Traders from Burma can be found in the large centers. They bring mostly cotton and silk goods, for which there is of late a rapidly increasing demand. Chieng Mai enjoys a most prosperous trade of this kind.

Silver and goldsmiths have no special season for following their craft. At any time they will melt down one's silver coins or gold leaf into any form wished. This is done in somewhat of a primitive style. The metal is beaten into the desired shape, which we will suppose to be a bowl. The bowl is then filled with a melted solution of beeswax and resin, which soon hardens within the bowl. The smith then traces the desired design upon the smooth exterior and hammers it into shape with a style and chisel, the plastic filling yielding to the blow. The inside filling is removed and the work is complete. This leaves a rough inside finish, but the bowl is elegant and rich upon the exterior. The value of the article is determined by weighing it, and adding a certain amount, often as much as fifty per cent for labor.

Paper is not an article in great demand; for banana leaves are cheaper and more handy for tying up bundles, and formerly all writing was done with stylus upon palm leaves. Recently there is ■

growing demand for paper. This paper is manufactured from the pulp of a certain tree. There are many manufactories scattered over the country, if so primitive a *modus operandi* can be so termed. The bark is reduced to a pulp by beating, when it is soaked in water until it becomes a mushy consistency. It is then run into molds of rectangular boxes, with bottoms of cloth. It is sun-dried and ready for use. The texture is coarse, but the color is a good white. The paper is tough and is applicable to a variety of uses, one of the most pleasing being a foundation for the rich and beautiful embroidery work of the princesses.

A large quantity of lacquer ware is made of all grades, from a rough finish in poor colors to a highly-polished surface in perfect shades of gold, red, and black. The usual articles made are betel boxes, from a shoulder-bag size to those a foot in diameter; bowls for household use, and cups, without handles, which, when inverted, fit over the mouths of *nam tōns*—clay water coolers.

The foundation for this lacquer work is a bamboo wicker, but one would never guess it when looking upon the exquisitely polished surface wrought in delicate and dainty designs of perfect hues. The gold color is obtained by adding powdered tumeric and gamboge to the melted shell-lac, and the beautiful red color by substituting annatto for the tumeric and dragon's blood for the gamboge. These goods are only made in sufficient quantities to supply the local demand. One oftentimes finds

work finished in shades of orange, garnet, and liver that are not pleasing to the eye. These shades are caused by the stick-lac being imperfectly freed from impurities. The process is simple, but requires care. The broken twigs, covered with the resinous exudation of the lac insect, are submerged in hot water. This melts the resinous matter, which sinks in a pliable mass to the bottom, frees the bits of wood and the remains of dead insects which come to the surface, and also dissolves the beautiful purple coloring matter which the insect secreted during its lifetime. The resin should be well kneaded while in this state, and if not, the poor shades referred to above are the result. The resin is then removed from the water and dried. It is then broken into bits and placed in a coarse cloth bag, held beside a charcoal fire and again melted, and squeezed out through the meshes of the cloth. It falls in sheets upon planks placed to catch it. It quickly hardens and in that state is known as the shell-lac of commerce. It is estimated that from the Indo-Chinese peninsula and the eastern sweep of India there are yearly exported to Great Britain alone no less than one thousand two hundred tons of lac products. The Laos country has unlimited resources along this line, and should join in the prosperity of her surrounding sister countries. In India the purple coloring matter liberated when the stick-lac is dissolved in water is made into a commercial form by straining the water and evaporating. The sediment formed is cut into squares and shipped under the name of lac dye.

It is a highly-valued dye, and is used to color the scarlet cloth of the British soldiery.

The native *chaus* use shell-lac for sealing wax. Indeed, I have often used for sealing letters the stick-lac in its virgin state, and it is entirely satisfactory, excepting in color, which is of an ugly yellow shade.

The method of weaving has been described in a preceding chapter. In the large cities the homes are giving up their looms and spinning wheels, as the Burmese market stall is always near at hand. But in the towns and villages they are as much used as in former ages. Certain districts work iron up into knives and swords and sabers; men, here and there, spend the sunset of life tying long grass into thatch; and at bends in the roads, one often runs upon a group of men sawing timber, after the Chinese method, from side to side. But as we said in the beginning of this chapter, there are no great industries carried on by companies and corporations, with capital and labor problems. There are no large buildings given over to the industries. Instead every man works beneath his own house or in a shed in the yard. When he feels disposed, he turns his hand to his work; when he does not, he lies in the house or carries the baby out for a stroll or bathes in the river, always knowing that Mother Nature will see that he has enough to eat—and it takes but little for clothing. Life is lived from day to day and from year to year without looking into the future, and striving to build a name or business to leave behind when dead.

The Laos are most emphatically a pastoral people. It is in the tilling of the soil, the sowing and the reaping that they find their chief delight. As rice is the chief article of food, great quantities of it must be raised, and about its cultivation would naturally center much of the life of the land. As Americans, we often remark that bread is the staff of life. But we very much resent a bread diet. In an equally accurate sense can the Laos say that rice is their staff of life, for it forms the bulk of every meal; so much so that a meal is referred to as "eat rice." Breakfast is "eat rice morning"; dinner, "eat rice noon," and supper, "eat rice evening." If a person is asked, "Are you well?" he will reply, "Yes, I ate my rice heartily," or if the reverse is true, "No, my rice does not taste well." The *chan* in his palace and the peasant in his modest home both depend upon the same staff of life. In the early morn, from all directions comes the sound of stone pestles as they are thrust down into stone mortars by housewives pounding the ingredients of curry to be eaten with the morning rice. At the evening hour, the soft air is musical with the clickety-click-tum of rice pounders. Every home has its rice bin, where is stored the yearly supply of grain.

Rice is capable of many varieties, and students tell us that there are one hundred and twenty kinds in India and Ceylon alone. The soil and climate of Laos-land are adaptable to many of these species, but there is one special kind which has won general favor, and is usually cultivated for the



A NATIVE RICE POUNDER, BESIDE A MISSION COMPOUND.

daily consumption. It is the glutinous rice previously referred to, and which is so nutritious that a man can do hard manual labor and eat but little else.

At the close of the dry season the rice plains lie baked hard and dry, with cracks and fissures running across them. Nothing could look more uninviting to vegetable life. But the rains commence and the fields drink in the daily downpour until the streams rise sufficiently to help flood them, covering them with a coating of rich silt.

The people are happy now. They flock to the plains and breathe the odor which is to them so delightful—fresh upturned mud. The slow plodding buffalo is ankle-deep in water as he draws the rude plow along. A sprouting bed is first prepared by sowing thickly the desired number of bushels of grain. When this is about a foot high it is carefully pulled from the bed, the top cut off a few inches, tied into bundles, and is then carried in baskets to the waiting field. Here women and men transplant it by quickly thrusting the roots downward into the soft mud. This process of transplanting requires more labor than our Carolina method, but with these people time is not money, and by this means not a grain is lost.

The water is never taken from the fields, and the rice is worked by pulling up with the hands what grass appears. If the rains are unsteady, and streams do not rise sufficiently to flood the plains, a curious kind of water wheel is used. It is made of bamboo and about the circumference runs a row

of bamboo joints. These as they go down into the water are filled, and as they come up empty their contents into a trough, which runs to the field adjacent.

If the season is good the yield of rice will be from thirty to three hundred fold, according to the soil. When the rains cease, the reapers, men, women, and youths, enter the fields, armed with hook-bladed knives, and with the sun begin their pleasant task. The immense plain waves and swells in the sunlight like a golden sea. A handful of the grain is caught in the left hand and the knife in the right severs it from the stalk. It is then laid upon the stubble, and very gently, too, for the grain is exceedingly deciduous and one rude touch would shatter it upon the ground. Alas, if a late straggling shower should come now! After the grain has dried for a few days in the sun it is carefully gathered into stacks and there shaken and beaten off, sometimes into large baskets, sometimes simply piled upon the ground. Busy hands then heap the golden grain into small baskets, while others pour it out upon a large bamboo mat. As it falls, it is winnowed by two men, who wield their fans with strength and skill.

From the time the new rice is put into the sprouting beds until it is stored away into the bins, it has to be watched night and day to keep elephants and cattle off the fields and also to see that some rogue of a thief does not steal it. An elevated shed, a few feet square, serves as watchman's *tūp* until the harvest season, when the watch-



"AS IT FALLS IT IS WINNOWNED."

man makes a cosy place amid the sheaves to keep off the heavy dew, and here the children love to come and play in the daytime. Their games are "bear," "tiger," and "hide-and-seek," just as children play the world around. The straw is carefully thrown into stacks and carried by children to the homestead, where it is stored away for the buffaloes.

The *chaus* have their grain brought in from the fields on the backs of elephants and stored in immense bins. The peasants either carry theirs in on their shoulders or by cattle trains. These cattle trains form one of the most picturesque phases of the life of this people. The fawn-colored creatures have suspended from their necks bells of all sorts and sizes. Upon their backs rest saddles, from which baskets are suspended on both sides. These are filled with rice, and covers are tightly tied over their mouths. The leader of a cattle train often wears a mask upon his face, which is gayly decorated with bright cloth and paper, and from the arch of the saddle sometimes rises high in the air an immense bunch of peacock feathers. This is done as an offering to the spirits who have sent blessings and a harvest the past year. Pleased by the gratitude of the man it is thought that they will in turn send a like blessing the following year.

During the morning hours of the harvest season the whole of the Laos country is throbbing with the tinkling of cattle bells. It is the sweetest of all sounds to this people, for it assures them food for the coming year. At times, the rains are scarce

and unsteady, and the rice crop is a failure. Several such seasons in succession will bring that scourge of the East—famine.

New rice is sweeter and more savory than is old rice, and any child can tell you that, and so in the harvest season one can see women with their portable restaurants, hung from their shoulders, going from house to house, peddling their ware, and waiting patiently while the purchaser slowly eats his rice, first dipping it into the curry bowl. When he has eaten, a drink can be had from the water jar gratis, and then the coins are handed over.

There are no students of science in the land, and few students of literature. The study of letters is mostly confined to the sacred writings in the monasteries. This is a great pity; for the Laos have many ancient works of poetry, of mythology, of folk-lore, of law and custom, and of reliable and authentic history. There are no students of art, though many men have a gift for expressing by a few bold lines the essential characteristics of the person or object portrayed. Each village has one or more doctors, but the profession is so closely allied with spirit-worship and witchcraft that it will be dealt with under that head.

It will be seen from this chapter that even among the Laos there is a choice as to occupation, and the wisdom of workmen, trained and skilled, is acknowledged.



A PORTABLE RESTAURANT.

CHAPTER XIII

CHILD LIFE

THE Laos country is even more truly a land of children than is Japan, and in no country of the East can prettier, brighter faces be found and more winsome manners, than among the children of this land.

When a child is born it is carried tenderly by a loving grandmother to the end of the veranda and there cold water from the jar is poured over and over the bit of warm humanity while it screams and kicks vigorously. When the bath is complete it is carried back into the room and wrapped in swaddling cloths—anything at hand, for it is very bad luck to prepare clothing for the expected child. It is then laid upon a small cotton pad, which is surrounded by roll upon roll of cloth until the babe is all but hidden within the soft wall. If it continues to cry, a little rice is stuffed into the mouth, and the child falls asleep sucking it. Even in the cool season a child is given this cold water bath in the open air. But it is not disturbed by much bathing afterwards.

Sometimes a box containing dirt and a fire upon it is then drawn up to the mother, and for several days she has to lie beside this roasting fire. The term roasting is entirely correct, for the flesh is

actually cooked upon the abdomen and back, if the recovery be slow, or complications set in. Often a woman dies "before the fire."

At such a time there are strings which have been blessed by spirit-doctors strung around the house to ward off evil spirits. Blooms of certain perfectly innocuous flowers are not allowed in the house, as sure death would result from inhalation. There are a score or more of such superstitious beliefs connected with the advent of the little one, the majority of them working discomfort to the mother. The Laos have a share in the general sorrow and suffering that crowns motherhood in the heathen world. If a woman has a natural delivery, this is minimized, but if, as is so often the case, there are complications, she is often left alone in her agony to die a torturous death, for "the evil spirit's hand is upon her," and no one, not even those of her own family, will remain, for "the evil spirit would stick to them, too." I could tell of treatment at such times that would make the blood run cold within one, but this hint at the awful truth is probably sufficient to show that the Laos are woefully in need of ambassadors of the Great Physician.

When a child is from one to two months old, it is promoted from the cotton pad to a swinging basket. It is then petted and loved and fondled and showed off to visiting friends, and spoiled very much as children are the world over. It is stuffed with rice and scraped banana—though the mother nourishes it with the breast for two or three years

—and is allowed to smoke and chew betel at about the age of three years. As one might readily suppose the mortality among young children is alarmingly great.

A babe is always laid upon its back so as to flatten its head. According to the popular idea, the flatter the head in the back the better. So mothers may be seen rubbing their infants' heads by the hour. In admiring a heathen baby, one should never say, "How pretty!" for the evil spirits will become envious and kill the child. But it is safe to say, "The child has a good eye," or, "His eye is black," which covers the ground as completely as though all known adjectives had been applied. The most complimentary thing to be said of an infant, is *Luang te*, or "Large, truly."

A child is not burdened with clothes until some seven or eight years old, but it may be adorned with anklets or bracelets or a fancy cap, and, indeed, I have seen an especially beloved child with a bit of a fancy Eton jacket, which gives him a most comical look.

These little folk are seldom taught self-government. They are allowed their own sweet way until they get bad beyond endurance. Then a mother, becoming angry, will pick up a stick and beat with heavy blows, accompanied by ugly threats, not the child, but the floor beside him. The child screams and jumps and runs about the veranda in an alarming manner, as though he was expecting each successive blow to fall upon him. After this vigorous punishment, quiet and order is sometimes

restored for a time, and the offender is docile and duly humbled.

Another method of managing unruly children is equally amusing. The culprit is tied with a stout rope by one ankle to the middle post of the veranda. The mother goes about her work or recreation, and leaves the child to scream and jump and pull until he wears himself out and lies down to sleep. When he awakes, he is in a good frame of mind.

Parents consider it the height of cruelty to "spank" a child, and punishment such as has been described is never inflicted as a result of misdemeanor, but as an evidence of anger on the parent's part. The reason that children so managed develop into the sturdy men and women that they do is found in the family life of the people. The children are kept with the parents, helping with whatever they are engaged in. Beside the mother's bamboo strip and water buckets, is to be seen one or more small ones, and when she goes for water there is a patter of little feet that brings up the rear, and tiny buckets are emptied into the large jar.

"Little fagots help to fill the basket, too."

While the mother weaves, the children care for the baby, either swinging it in the basket or carrying it in the approved style astride the hip. This is said to be comfortable for the baby, but it gives the nurse a very oblique look. When the father goes to the rice field, the little girls and boys fol-



"WHEN THE FATHER GOES TO THE RICE FIELDS."—A Christian family.

low and mind the buffaloes, keeping them grazing in certain places given over to them, or confining them to the dividing ridges when the grain hangs upon the stalk.

In the evening, the children are all gathered beneath the paternal roof. They listen deferentially to their parents' conversation, respect for elders being an inherent trait of the people. Usually the houses are poorly lighted, a smoky torch or greasy lamp, without a chimney, being, until recently, the only means of illumination. So there are no evening games, and early the children go to bed, one by one, as they may become sleepy.

In the morning they wash their mouths, and if the season be cool they sometimes plunge into the river to "warm" themselves. The little girls comb their hair and coil it into a knot at the back of the head, exactly as their mothers do, and their skirts differ only in size. Boys adjust their *pa tois* as do their fathers: and altogether children look like little men and women. In running, girls always remove the rings from their ears, as the lobes might be torn by the heavy coil.

And they have their fun, too. "Tag," "base," "hide-and-seek," and "crack-the-whip," are great favorites. In March the air above is studded with kites, tailless kites that would shame an American kite to an open blush. Seldom does a boy have to run to mount his kite in the air. He gets it up by means of little jerks upon the string. Kite fights in midair are enjoyed by old as well as young.

Probably the favorite game of Laos childhood,

one that might be termed the national game, is played by tossing coins. Several holes are dug in the ground and around them a circle is drawn, and the contestants stand off some eight or ten feet and toss the coin. The game is full of interest and excitement to the players, the coins often, though not always, going to the winner. About the only quarrels I have ever seen among the children have been over this game.

There are many rhymes and childhood jingles in the language, and young and old like to try to repeat rapidly difficult sentences, such as our familiar one, which begins "Peter Piper picked a peck of purple podded peppers." Many of their jingles are like unto those of "Mother Goose," and some have a deep meaning and helpful tone. One popular rhyme runs as follows:—

"Chang tua noi,
Kin nam, oi
Chep, lu tawng."

This they cry out to young elephants as they pass, a rough translation being, "Little elephant, if you eat sugar-cane syrup you will have stomach ache."

There are many beautiful folk-lore stories, which parents repeat to their children, and wonderful tales are told them, more marvelous than the adventures of Jack the Giant Killer. One or two of the folk-lore stories will be of interest here. We will quote from Miss Fleeson's charming collection.*

* *Laos Folk-Lore*, by Katherine M. Fleeson.

THE MAN IN THE MOON

"There was a blacksmith once, who complained: 'I am not well, and my work is too warm. I want to be a stone on the mountain. There it must be cool, for the wind blows and the trees give a shade.'

"A wise man, who had power over all things, replied: 'Go thou, be a stone.' And he was a stone high up on the mountain side.

"It happened a stonecutter came that way for stone, and, when he saw the one that had been the blacksmith, he knew it was what he sought, and he began to cut it.

"The stone cried out: 'This hurts. I no longer want to be a stone, a stonecutter I want to be. That would be pleasant.'

"The wise man, humoring him, said: 'Be a cutter.' Thus he became a stonecutter, and, as he went seeking suitable stones he grew tired, and his feet were sore. He whimpered: 'I no longer want to cut stone. I would be the sun; that would be pleasant.'

"The wise man commanded: 'Be the sun.' And he was the sun.

"But the sun was warmer than the blacksmith, than a stone, than a stonecutter, and he complained: 'I do not like this. I would be the moon. It looks cool.'

"The wise man spake yet again: 'Be the moon.' And he was the moon.

" 'This is warmer than being the sun,' murmured he. 'For the light from the sun shines on me ever. I do not want to be the moon. I would be a smith again. That, verily, is the best life.'

"But the wise man replied: 'I am weary of your changing. You wanted to be the moon; the moon you are, and it you will remain.'

"And in yon high heaven lives he to this day."

THE LEGEND OF THE RICE

"In the days when the earth was young and all things were better than they now are, when men and women

were stronger and of greater beauty, and the fruit of the trees was larger and sweeter than that which we now eat, rice, the food of the people, was of larger grain. One grain was all a man could eat, and in those early days, such, too, was the merit of the people, they never had to toil gathering the rice, for, when ripe, it fell from the stalks and rolled into the villages, even into the granaries.

"And upon a year, when the rice was larger and more plentiful than ever before, a widow said to her daughter: 'Our granaries are too small. We will pull them down and build larger.'

"When the old granaries were pulled down and the new one not yet ready for use, the rice was ripe in the fields. Great haste was made, but the rice came rolling in where the work was going on, and the widow, angered, struck a grain and cried: 'Could you not wait in the fields until we were ready? You should not bother us now when you are not wanted.'

"The rice broke into thousands of pieces and said: 'From this time forth, we will wait in the fields until we are wanted,' and, from that time the rice has been of small grain, and the people of the earth must gather it into the granary from the fields."

Children spend much time gathering flowers and stringing the blossoms to coil around their hair. They are very clever in weaving flowers into curious designs to be sent as offerings to the temple. The leaves are always carefully plucked off in arranging them, leaving only a mass of blooms, this because of their taste in the matter. When I was new to the country I sent a young girl down into the garden with scissors and tray to cut roses to carry up to the chapel for the morning service. I cautioned her to cut the stems long. To my utter astonishment she appeared with the tray

piled up high with roses upon long, leafless stems. She had carefully clipped off every leaf.

When mothers go to the temple they carry their children with them, and teach them to fold their hands, bow their heads, and place a flower at the foot of the idol. They also train the little girls to sit correctly, with both feet on the same side, and all their children are early taught to bow the head in walking past an elder or superior.

Many of the boys enter the temple for a period of several years at least, until the prefix *Ai* can be dropped from their names, and they be free from the term of reproach "green," which is given every man until he has won his title *Noi* or *Nan*, by taking partial or full monastic orders respectively. Memorizing constitutes the sum and substance of native education. It is just here that mission schools find their greatest difficulty in teaching. The pupils can readily memorize page after page of their lessons, but if asked to tell in their own words what they are repeating, they are floored at once. Thus one can see how this system of memorizing, though admittedly good for mind discipline to a certain degree, can be pushed until all other mental activities are benumbed.

Would that this were the only side of child life in Laos! But there is another, a dark side that sends a chill and a shudder from bound to bound of the entire land. It is caused by the scourge of spirit-worship, the pricks of ignorance, the bondage of fear. The subject is an endless one, but we will touch upon it in a chapter that is to follow.

CHAPTER XIV

A LOOK AT BUDDHISM

SIAM is known to be a Buddhist nation. In the classification of the world's religions one hundred million souls are put down as Buddhist, and of this number ten million come from Siam; this before the recent loss of territory to France, which, of course diminished the number of Buddhists in Siam, but not in Indo-China. In Siam, as a whole, there are known to be more than a hundred thousand monks who wear the yellow robe of the Sacred Order, and who are teachers of this faith. In every village of the land there are monasteries called *wats*, which are abiding evidences of the religion. From the most northern province to the most southern bounds the soft air of the evening hour is made mellow with the tuneful notes of *wat* bells and drums, the echoes floating down across the rice plains and up the valleys to the highest mountain top. His majesty the king, in his coronation, has to take upon himself the most solemn vows to support the religion of Lord Buddha, and church and state are one. Siam is worthy of the title of being a Buddhist nation!

In this day of the study of comparative religion Buddhism is a well-known religion to Americans. But to point our story the more clearly it will not be amiss to touch upon the fundamental principles

of the belief. In the fifth chapter of Rhys Davids' *Buddhism* we find the moral precepts of the faith as they are held in India and Siam. Leaving the more metaphysical ones, we will quote a few of those of a more practical nature. From the well-known

BUDDHIST BEATITUDES

A deva speaks:—

1. Many angels and men
Have held various things blessings,
When they were yearning for happiness.
Do thou declare to us the chief good.

Gotama answers:—

2. Not to serve the foolish,
But to serve the wise;
To honor those worthy of honor:
This is the greatest blessing.
3. To dwell in a pleasant land,
Good works done in a former birth,
Right desires in the heart:
This is the greatest blessing.
4. Much insight and education,
Self-control and pleasant speech,
And whatever word be well-spoken:
This is the greatest blessing.
5. To support father and mother,
To cherish wife and child,
To follow a peaceful calling;
This is the greatest blessing.
6. To bestow alms and live righteously,
To give help to kindred,
Deeds which cannot be blamed;
These are the greatest blessings.

7. To abhor, and cease from sin,
Abstinence from strong drink,
Not to be weary in well-doing;
These are the greatest blessings.
8. Reverence and lowliness,
Contentment and gratitude,
The hearing of the Law at due seasons:
This is the greatest blessing.
9. To be long-suffering and meek,
To associate with the tranquil (*i. e.*, Buddhist monks),
Religious talk at due seasons:
This is the greatest blessing.
10. Self-restraint and purity,
The knowledge of the Noble Truths,
The realization of Nirvana:
This is the greatest blessing.
11. Beneath the stroke of life's changes,
The mind that shaketh not,
Without grief or passion, and secure;
Theirs is the greatest blessing.
12. On every side are invincible
They who do acts like these,
On every side they walk in safety,
And theirs is the greatest blessing.

Again, the Nidhikanda Sutta (Treasure Chapter), after saying that what men call treasure when laid up in a deep pit, profits nothing, and may easily be lost, goes on:—

The (real) treasure is that laid up by man or woman
Through charity and piety, temperance and self-control,
In the sacred shrine, or the Buddhist *ehurch*,
In the individual man, in the stranger and sojourner,

In his father and mother, and elder brother.

The treasure thus hid is secure, and passes not away:

Though he leave the fleeting riches of this world, this ■
man takes with him—

A treasure that no wrong of others and no thief can steal

Let the wise man do good deeds—the treasure that follows
of itself.

The last quotation might be misleading to an American mind, so I quote Mr. Davids' explanation:—

“ . . . The idea is simply that good deeds—and bad ones, too—done in one birth will be the very thing that will determine the material and spiritual lot of the individual in the next birth—of another individual, from our point of view; of the same, according to the Buddhist theory. Passages like these have naturally been understood by Europeans to refer to a soul passing from a temporary state to an eternal one; but such an idea was never present to the mind of a Buddhist reading them.”

Let us quote further from this chapter of Mr. Davids' his translation of extracts from the Dhamma-pada, or Scripture, verses:—

5. For never in this world does hatred cease by hatred;
Hatred ceases by love; this is always its nature.

61. As long as the sin bears no fruit,
The fool, he thinks it honey;
But when the sin ripens,
Then, indeed, he goes down into sorrow.

103. One may conquer a thousand thousand men in battle,
But he who conquers himself alone is the greatest
victor.

121. Let no man think lightly of sin, saying in his heart,
It cannot overtake me.
159. Let a man make himself what he preaches to others;
The well-subdued may subdue others; one's self, indeed, is hard to tame.
176. The man who has transgressed one law, and (speaks) lies,
And scoffs at the next world, there is no evil he will not do.
223. Let a man overcome anger by kindness, evil by good;
Let him conquer the stingy by a gift, the liar by truth.
354. The gift of the Law exceeds all gifts,
The sweetness of the Law exceeds all sweetness,
The light of the Law exceeds all delight,
The extinction of thirst overcomes all grief.

The eightfold sacred formula declared by Buddha is as follows:—

1. One should not destroy life.
2. One should not take that which is not given.
3. One should not tell lies.
4. One should not become a drinker of intoxicating liquors.
5. One should refrain from unlawful sexual intercourse—
—an ignoble thing.
6. One should not eat unseasonable food at nights.
7. One should not wear garlands or use perfumes.
8. One should sleep on a mat spread on the ground.

The first five of these precepts are binding upon every Buddhist man, woman, and child. The last three are not obligatory, but a person who wishes to make special *merit* can take them upon himself for a short season, and every Buddhist is supposed

to keep the last three on their holy or Sabbath days. Besides these eight precepts, divided into the five obligatory and the three permissive laws, there is another code which embraces ten sins, which are considered especially heinous. They are thus divided:—

Three of the body.

Taking life.

Theft (taking what has not been given).

Unlawful sexual intercourse.

Four of speech.

Lying.

Slander (includes "saying here what one hears there").

Abuse (swearing).

Vain conversation.

Three of the mind.

Covetousness.

Malice.

Skepticism.

And so we could go on quoting page after page to show the ethical beauty and high moral tone of this belief, which declares self-control, wisdom, and universal charity, to be the highest aim and happiness of man.

"But we must remember that Buddhism is merely a system of ethics, and that its ethics are not backed by moral sanctions. For Buddhism teaches that all sentient beings alike go the round of *sang sara*, reincarnation, and are now born in the world of men—*manusatok*—now in the worlds above men—*deva tok*—now in the places of

torment below—*narōk*. There is no place in the system for a Sentient Being in and of Himself unchangeable, superior to all other sentient beings. There is no One who is 'infinite, eternal and unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth.' There is no Giver of moral law; no just Judge of all.

"Hence, even the so-called obligatory precepts—*sila*—are only relatively obligatory. They are not binding upon all men everywhere by virtue of divine right and as being grounded in eternal principles of truth; but they bind only such individuals as by becoming Buddhists assume their obligations. It is, therefore, only by accommodation that we speak or write in English of Buddhist law, the Buddhist church, sin, heaven, hell, religion.

"Can a system of ethics which has no God, no moral sanctions for its ethics, and no help for man outside of man himself, be properly called a religion?"*

Now, let us see what this Buddhism has done for the Laos.

"'Tis distance lends enchantment to the view." And, as from our western shores, we behold this belief amidst the haze of oriental luxuriousness, the clouds of eastern rosy hue, it rises in architectural beauty, and in form we declare it perfect. Then it should follow that man as a rational moral being should rise to a high degree of natural beauty of character under the beneficent teachings of this

* From the Rev. W. C. Dodd.

belief, especially, when so well supported by its Sacred Order, one hundred thousand strong, in the kingdom.

But the form of things is very different from their natures. Let us look at the influence of this belief upon the individual, the community, the country. Let us look at the way some of the obligatory laws are regarded by even the devout. There is a popular saying which runs, "The precepts of Gotama are the right thing to accept; but who can observe them?" This is repeated to exculpate themselves for not keeping the obligatory commands. To show that these laws are lightly held by the people let us look at the first one and the manner of its keeping. It reads thus: "One should not destroy life." From this commandment it is generally believed that no Buddhist eats meat. In fact, the Laos think it hard, indeed, if they have not meat curry at least once a day. They do not especially like to strike the blow that kills, so they go fishing by the scores and hundreds and thousands, pull the fish from the water and justify themselves by saying that the fish straightway die a natural death. A man who has laid up a large amount of *merit*, will feel that he can afford to strike a death blow and not have much deducted from his credit, so he kills a cow or a hog and the village has a feast. And nearly always a Chinaman can be found who is willing enough to make a coin by butchering. And so in that way meat can be obtained. The monks eat meat curry, and say they are blameless because some one else took the

life, not they. Aside from this striving to keep the letter at the expense of the spirit, the people seem to have lost sight entirely of the original meaning of the command. I have seen a man drive a diseased buffalo away to the forest to be torn to pieces by vultures before life left the body, rather than strike a blow upon the head and end the suffering. And that same man has cut off many a chicken's head that he may have meat for his curry. When reproached for his inconsistency, he would say, "When hungry I forget the command"; or, "I will make much *merit* to cover the sin." Frogs are considered one of the greatest of delicacies, and during the first of the rainy season half of the whole country goes a-frog hunting, while the other half is a-fishing.

We will take time to glance at another one of these commands, the fourth one, which says, "One should not become a drinker of intoxicating liquors." There are few religious and official ceremonies and observances in the land that are not accompanied with drinking, and no shame falls upon the intoxicated victim. Until recently every village was free to make its own arrack and wine from rice and juices of certain palm trees. There is but little riotous drunkenness, save in connection with civil and religious observances. At one time we had trouble with a Buddhist coolie about drinking. In talking the matter over with our native minister, a man whose knowledge of the facts could not be doubted, much less his word, he affirmed that every man in the country drank, ex-

cepting the Christians. "Why is this?" I asked; "their law forbids the drinking thereof, surely they know the law." "Ah, yes, they know the law, but they have no power to obey the law. They know the law, but not God. Let them turn their faces to God, as the Christian youths have done, and he will strengthen them to keep the law." And then he added slowly and thoughtfully, "But they love their old natures, they turn their faces from God, they will not look to him and be saved."

Let us hear from other writers along this line. Mr. Young in his book on Siam, *The Kingdom of the Yellow Robe*, says:—

Ask any person you meet a few questions about the sage who propounded the faith they are supposed to hold, and it will be speedily discovered that even those who are most assiduous in their attendance at the temple (monastery), and who are most charitable in the offerings they give to the priests, know little of the life and less of the teachings of him whom they apparently worship. . . . It is not possible to call them Buddhists at all if the term is to be used as comparable to the term Christian, as applied to the believers in Christ in western lands. The great moral precepts of this religion are not taught to them, are unknown to them, and it is very questionable if the Sanskrit words for benevolence, gratitude, charity, and kindred virtues have any parallel in the ordinary everyday vocabulary of the people. Even if such words do exist they are only understood by the learned few, and would be as utterly incompre-

hensible to the great mass of the people as Greek and Latin."

What Mr. Young says of the Siamese is fully as true of the Laos. The people themselves acknowledge that they do not keep the five obligatory commandments; and if the ethics and morals of the system are unknown to them, there naturally comes the question, why are there so many Buddhist monasteries, why so many monks? Probably the strongest reason is to be found in the universality of the religious instinct in man. They must have some religion, and Buddhist missionaries brought them this one many centuries ago. Its morals and ethics appealed to the Shans and they adopted them. But the monks soon discovered that their natures and desires were not changed by donning the sacred robe. They did not love to pore over the teachings of Gotama, for, though they admired the precepts, they had no power to attain to them. And so the system settled down to a basis of *merit* and *demerit* very much like credit and debit.

To understand this fully, it must be constantly borne in mind that Buddhists believe in no soul as the Christian world understands the life within man. Gotama repeatedly denies the existence of soul, and warned his followers against the heresy of that belief. Yet some reason had to be given for the existence here of happiness and sorrow and their apparent unequal distribution. So Buddha resorted to "an incomprehensible mystery," the doctrine of *kama*.

"This is the doctrine that, as soon as a sentient being (man, animal, or angel) dies, a new being is produced in a more or less painful and material state of existence, according to the *kama*, the desert or *merit* (or *demerit*) of the being who had died. The cause which produces the new being is *dhanha*, thirst, or *upadana*, grasping; which are expressions for nearly similar states of mind. Sensations originate in the contact of the organs of sense with the exterior world; from sensation springs a desire to satisfy a felt want, a yearning, a thirst; from 'thirst' results a 'grasping' after objects to satisfy that desire; that grasping state of mind causes the new being (not, of course, a new soul, but a new set of *khanda*, a new body with mental tendencies and capabilities). The *kama* of the previous set of *khanda* or sentient being, then determines the locality, nature, and future of the *new* set of *khanda*, or new sentient being."*

Most assuredly this is an "incomprehensible mystery," but nevertheless it is one of the universally accepted doctrines of this faith. All Buddhist Shans believe it, and they strive in life not to attain unto virtue or righteousness, but to make *merit* to add to their credit against the day of their death. And so the religion of Buddhist Shans may be summed up in that one word, *merit*. They sweep the monastery ground; build bridges and *salas* and *wats*; make gifts for the monks, and present them with daily food; give a drink of water to

* From Davids' *Buddhism*.

a thirsty traveler; all to add a little credit to their account. A coop of chickens on its way to market was set down on the road side while the bearer rested in the shade for a minute. The chickens were hot and panting with thirst. As my jinrikisha passed the coop, my Buddhist coolie called to a child standing near, "Run get a dipper and water the chickens for me so that I can make a little *merit*." Of course, this belief tends to make charity at a premium and unkindness below par. But can the leopard change his spots or do men gather grapes of thistles? Nay, and so we cannot pluck the perfect fruit of love when the roots are all nourished and supported by selfishness.

But let us again quote from Mr. Young. He has been speaking at length of the different powers, laws, etc., of Buddhism, and concludes by saying:—

" . . . But the above lines will be sufficient to outline the moral philosophy of that system which not only the monks should bear out in their lives, but to which every true believer in Buddhism is expected to conform. Practically, however, these counsels are so many obsolete laws, long since dead and forgotten. Outside the permanent monks and a few students, the vast majority of the people know nothing whatever of the system; and if some of the learned writers upon Buddhism in Europe were to preach their Buddhist sermons to the subjects of the only independent Buddhist king remaining, the people would stare in wonder at the new teachers and ask one another what strange

doctrines were these that were being preached unto them."

It is readily granted that this belief in *merit* is better than no belief at all; and it has made of the nation a comparatively kind-hearted and generous people, but we do maintain that it is less than the faintest shadow of a resemblance to the perfect form of ethical beauty that the religion should build if ethics and morals are what constitute a true religion; and that instead of "going on to perfection," each successive generation drops below the previous one. This, from their point of view, and now one word from ours. We who bear the name of Christ believe that the noblest of all life is the life of service. The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and the servant is not greater than his lord. If we trace along down through the pages of history the names of the great men are invariably those who have served. Buddhism fails utterly here. Sir John Bowring dedicated his book, *Siam*, to the late king, the supreme sacred head of Buddhism, yet he found it necessary with consistency to speak as follows:—

"The real and invincible objection to Buddhism is its selfishness, its disregard of others, its deficiency in all the promptings of sympathy and benevolence. Its highest virtue is exhibited in fruitless contemplation, its noblest reward is to be found in eternal repose. A monk seems to care nothing about the condition of those who surround him; he makes no effort for their elevation or im-

provement. He scarcely reproves their sins, or encourages their virtues; he is self-satisfied with his own superior holiness, and would not move his finger to remove any mass of human misery. . . . Compared with the privileges and exemptions which the monks enjoy, their privations are few; 'they toil not, neither do they spin'; they make no contributions to statute labor; they pay no taxes, render no services to the sovereign or the state."

CHAPTER XV

LAOS WATS

AMONG the Shans there are but three tenets of Buddhism that are understood, either by the people or the members of the Sacred Order, namely, the doctrine of *kama*, or *merit* and *demerit*; the "incomprehensible mystery" which denies a soul and yet establishes transmigration, and the other doctrine of no Creator, no God. The beautiful ethics and sound morals are simply nonexistent. So we must look for some other reason to account for the immense following, in a nominal way, of the religion. Aside from the fundamental reason of the religious instinct of man, the answer is found in the system of organization or order, and in the fact that Buddhists are not exclusive. Gotama taught that it was heresy to consult soothsayers, put trust in auguries, or to value charms and prognostics. Yet Buddhists admit all of this and more—witchcraft, for instance—and not alone in the laymen, but the very monastery walls shelter and foster these beliefs.

Since *merit* is the chief and only aim of Buddhism among the Shans, and the Sacred Order is the highest expression of this *merit*, a large per cent of the men of the land have at some period of their lives been a member of the order. Another form of *merit*-making that presses hard for

first honor, is the building of *wats*, *prachedīs*, *salas*, and idols.

The *wats* themselves are the most pleasing to the eye of all the architectural creations of the land. In fact, until recently they were the only buildings worthy of any consideration from that viewpoint. They always occupy the most attractive sites in the community, usually crowning the hilltops or mounds of prominence, and are surrounded and sometimes overshadowed by wide-spreading banyans and sacred *bo* trees. After a journey on pony or elephant across bare rice plains which hurl into one's face glare as well as heat; or through matted jungles, it is deliciously refreshing to face, by a bend in the road, one of these *wats*, with its shadowy recesses beneath green and cool trees; its beauty of towering palmettoes above and trim park beneath; its glory in color of façade and temple roof; its architectural splendor and beauty; its musical tinkle of bells; and, above all, its look of restfulness and peace. One feels instinctively the impulse of worship, but draw near and you are shocked by the cheap material used; the tawdry effect; the temporary appearance of walls and roofs—they are all but crumbling; the falling away of veneering of walls and gilding of façades; the accumulation of dirt and dust, bats, and spiders at home in the dark nooks; the lack of solemnity in the groups of chatting women and monks; and the glaring nonobservance of the rules of the order by the monks themselves. At a distance rest and worship were suggested; but upon approach it is

revealed as stagnation and the empty form of religious observance.

A *wat* is more truly a monastery than a temple. It consists of several buildings scattered about a park-like ground, which is inclosed by a brick wall, usually plastered to look like white stone at a distance. The building where the idols are kept and where the people come to worship is called a *wihara*, or sometimes *wihan*, and is the central and most prominent feature of a *wat*. About it, arranged on one or two sides of the grounds run the long, low buildings containing the cells of the monks. There is also a bell tower and a library, if the *wat* be the chief one of the diocese. The ground on which the *wat* rests has been dedicated forever to the chapter. It is the property of the order. The buildings and idols are dedicated in the same way. There is no god to whom they are consecrated.

Excepting the library the *wihara* is the most sacred part of the grounds. It is a large, oblong building, having its top covered with tiered roofs, which are tiled with red-clay tiles, or preferably with porcelain ones of many colors and hues, or covered with wooden shingles or with thatch. The gabled ends of the roof rise upward and end in a backward curve of wood or metal, which is brilliantly gilded and set with mosaics of glass, enamel or bits of chinaware. From the extreme end of each, there sometimes hangs a brass bell, with long clapper ending in a flattened shape, molded like the leaf of the sacred *bo* tree. The gentlest breeze

catches these leaves and sways them so as to strike the pure metal of the bell. A soft tinkle is the result,

"As if a choir
Of golden-nested birds in heaven were singing;
And with a lulling sound
The music floats around
And drops like balm into the drowsy ear."

The triangular-shaped façade often is richly set in colored glass and mosaics, and is either traced in gold designs or the center is entirely gold surrounded by a border of mosaics and glass. A colonnade may or may not run around the *wihara*, but if it does, the roof is supported by immense columns, which give a massive effect. From a distance it is indescribably rich and beautiful. Well might an enraptured foreigner, accustomed to the cold white or somber shades of his architectural creations, cry out with pleasure when first beholding one of these large temples from a distance.

The display of gold is surprising, and one can readily understand how there is an annual import of gold leaf into Siam for this purpose, amounting to two hundred thousand dollars, Mexican, besides the quantity of gold leaf that is beaten out by native smiths, especially at Bangkok. All over the entire country gold leaf is for sale in the markets. It is sold in folded sheets of paper about two by three inches in size. A *merit*-maker can buy a few sheets of this leaf, present it to the monks, and have a credit written down to his existence.

The walls of the *wihara* are sometimes painted

in the native style, which is very like the familiar painting of the Chinese, the subjects being taken from the mythical existences of Buddha. This, of course, gives room for a rare display of animal life. Sometimes one sees pictures of the various Buddhist hells, the principal ones of which are eight in number. These are horrible, and will give a foreigner "the creeps" for weeks to come. They are often impure in conception, and should not be tolerated, far less blazoned upon the sacred walls. Burning alive, scalping, flaying, and such forms of torture are among the most innocent scenes depicted. I am glad to say that Laos Shans are not quite so fond of thus decorating their temples as are their southern kinsmen. Mr. Young tells of an amusing confusion of personages, chronology, and events, seen upon one of the Bangkok temple walls:—

"He — the artist — has placed a number of European ladies and gentlemen of the time of Louis XIV on the side of a hill, where they are enjoying themselves with dance and song. It is a rural picnic. Under the hill is a railway tunnel, with a train about to enter, and on the summit is Buddha in a contemplative attitude brooding over the whole, but owing to the faulty perspective of the drawing, it is impossible to state whether Buddha is contemplating the scene of merriment or brooding over the curious handiwork of the designer."

These *wiharas* are said to face always the east, and I have never seen one otherwise. This is to

allow the image within to look steadfastly toward the rising sun. Thus those who seek the temple during the early morning hour will find their god wrapt in a glow of light which, though borrowed, is very effective. I have noted frequently that the windows of these *wiharas* are arranged so as to leave the body of the room in somberness while the shrine stands out in a glow of light. This effect is impossible to attain when the *wihara* has an open front or side, as is often the case.

There may be one or several hundred idols upon the shrine, and these may vary in size from an inch in height to one hundred and fifty feet, as is the case in the reclining idol in *Wat Po*, Bangkok. It is interesting to know that an idol does not become a god in the process of construction until its eyes are put in. That act is the occasion of a great ceremony. A holy day is selected, the event advertised, and a large concourse of people meet to see the monks sprinkle holy water and the smith set the pearl eyes. At this time the image is also gilded, and it is a god ready to be worshiped. It may be true that the "intelligent and highly spiritual" do not worship these idols, but look through them to Buddha. But where are the "intelligent and highly spiritual" to be found under the fostering care of this religion?

The dormitories of the monks should be bare of furniture, and are nearly always so. At the back of the small room is suspended a cord, upon which hang the extra garments. There is sometimes a cotton *salī* upon the floor for a bed, and again only

a mat. A small water jar and a few such simple things are sometimes found. The monks of high rank often have their cells fitted up with comfort. Indeed, some are elegantly furnished, as furnishing goes in that land.

The value of material used in *wat*-building depends upon the means of the person, family, or village that builds the *wat*. The *wat luang* is the head *wat* of each diocese, where resides the monk in office corresponding somewhat to "bishop." At the *wat luangs* are found the libraries, which are elevated tower-like buildings reached by means of a ladder. Here the sacred *dham*, or books, containing the ethics and commands of the religion are kept. They are written with ink on paper, or with a stylus on palm leaves from one to two feet long and some three or four inches wide. Each oblong leaf is pierced at both ends with a round hole. A cord is run through these holes and thus the leaves are bound together. The top and bottom are often shielded by a wooden leaf, which is gayly gilded and decorated. The long cord which runs through the leaves is drawn tightly, and the free ends wrapped around the whole, holding the leaves firmly in place. When one wishes to read the book, the cord is unwrapped and allows play for the leaves, which can be turned at pleasure.

These books are not written in the vernacular wholly, but contain so many Pali words and expressions that it is very difficult for any but a student to understand them. Then, why do the natives sit and listen while they are being read?

Because they listen to make *merit*, and their maxim, "Blessed is he that heareth the Law," does not enforce intellectual attention. One can sit within sound of the monk's voice, and while he reads, can think of the grand cremation to take place next month, or of the theater he attended the night before, or of anything else he may wish. He can allow the eyes to rove to the stranger who is passing, and the mind can puzzle as to who he may be, and yet he can reap *merit*, for "Blessed is he that *heareth* the Law."

At one time we were camped in a *wat luang* ground when a monk came for a *dham* to read at a special *wat* service to be held next day. He rejected many of the books, and seemed difficult to please. I afterwards learned that he was searching for a very short *dham*. He said that his parishioners had instructed him to "make it short." So without regard to contents he was selecting his book.

Another part of every *wat* is the bell tower. Strictly speaking, it is no bell tower at all, but a drum tower. Among the Laos, drums are more popular than bells, and when the latter exist they are struck instead of being rung. Drums and bells are not used to call the people to worship, but they constitute a part of worship, the beating of them by monks being *merit*. Several drums are in every tower, each varying in size and tone from the other. Much skill is manifested in the beating of them. Usually the first note is heard as twilight begins to fade. It comes in a low, full musical

vibration. As it rolls away in the distance, another is sent forth as full and sweet, and then another until they begin to chase each other and hasten in their movements. Then a higher, sweeter note joins in and alternates with it. The interval in tone is such as to make the harmony perfect. These two are shortly joined by a third. And if there be a bell, it too is struck at certain points in the beating. *Wats* differ much in the tone of their drums and in the skill of the monks in beating, but all *wats* are alike in having drum-beating a very prominent part of their daily routine.

These drums are beat on special holidays and upon the Buddhist sacred days, and always when there occurs an eclipse of the moon. Then every drum in the land clatters at a rate that destroys all harmony. At one time when we were itinerating, the missionary gave an open-air stereopticon lecture on the life of Christ. But first were shown a few native pictures and then a chart of the great solar system, with the planets revolving. As the earth's moon began to go into eclipse, the crowd gayly called out to some monks near by, "Run, run, and beat your drums; quick, or it will all be devoured!" This chart always makes a deep impression upon the natives, though at first they neither understand nor believe it. Their sacred books teach that an eclipse is caused by a monster dragon devouring the moon, and so they make as much noise as they can to frighten him away.

In *wat* grounds, and sometimes isolated, is to be

found a pleasing style of architectural creation known as a *prachedī*. It is a pyramidal monument, and the tapering spire may end in conical form. These *prachedīs* contain or cover some relic or image of Buddha, and are as sacred as the *wihara*. When a true relic is wanting, an imitation serves the purpose quite as satisfactorily.

Once every year one sees *wat* grounds filled with small mounds of sand gayly decorated. The sand is brought by women and children in baskets and piled in these mounds. They are decorated with green boughs and colored papers, cut and fashioned into brilliant flowers and banners. Upon the mounds offerings of rice, sweetmeats, and fruits are placed, and water is poured at the base. Then follows a very strange part of the ceremony. White cords are fastened to the mounds and are passed into the *wihara* and attached to the idol to let it know that the mounds are outside. Poor idol, how dull and stupid! The little mounds are play *wats* and are considered to bring great *merit* to the builders. The sand is afterwards used to cast over the *wat* park, keeping it white and level.

There are many marks upon rocks in Siam that are said to be footprints of Buddha. Over each is built a *wat*, and these are considered especially sacred. There is one of these footprints near Chieng Mai upon a mountain top, some five miles from the city. Another one is found in the Chieng Mai rapids, and still another is located at Mount Prabat—Sacred Foot—which is some eighty miles from Bangkok, and is one of the most holy places

in the whole kingdom. Pilgrimages are made by *merit*-seekers to these places very much as Mohammedans go on a pilgrimage to Mecca.

A *wat* is not alone monastery and temple, but is inn as well, there being no hotels or public houses in the country. A stranger can enter at any hour of the day or night and find welcome and shelter. No charge is made, for giving of the hospitality is *merit*, and so is sufficient *būn*. There is usually upon the *wat* ground a *sala*, or rest house, which can be used by the traveling public. A foreigner or native is free to stop for a day or a night or longer. The *wat* ground is a social center also. There are no daily papers or clubs to scatter news and form a medium of exchange, so the parishioners gather at their *wat* and chat and gossip and joke. On gala days or holidays the *wat* is thronged with people, and there are several forms of entertainments.

At one time an idol was to be dedicated in a monastery near Lakawn. Several of the missionaries of the station decided to go out to the grounds, as the ceremonies were of such a nature as to draw people from over a large district hitherto untouched by our station work. The pressure of regular work was such that the trip could not be made until the third and last day, so early that morning we turned our ponies' heads down the road toward the distant temple. The sun was already hot, though it was but the third hour of the day. The dust was suffocating, for the ground had been burned to powder by the scorching sun of the dry

season. The air quivered with the intensity of the heat. We pulled down our large pith hats and raised our double umbrellas, and tried to think of the message we had to deliver instead of letting our thoughts dwell on the discomforts of the way. In due time we came within sound of the festivities of the *wat* and a bend in the road brought us face to face with the scene.

The *wat* was partly overshadowed by banyans, palms, and palmettoes, which were standing erect and stately in the dead calm. The richly-tiled roof and gilded façade were fairly resplendent in a glory of light as they caught the sun's rays. There was an air of festivity abroad; banners hung aloft and newly-erected booths were filled to overflowing with people and offerings. The large, open court before the temple, which lay unprotected from the sun, was destitute of people save as they hurried across it. No one cared to tarry there in the blazing heat and dust. A long line of empty baskets ran from the temple gate across the court to the feet of our ponies. To the left were several elephant howdahs, and near by was a stationary ladder by means of which the visiting dignitaries could dismount from their elephants without causing the beast to kneel. The howdahs were resting upon the ground in groups, and the drivers were squatting beneath their shade, lazily watching their immense beasts that were hobbled within a thicket near by. In front of the *wat* walls were arranged in rows lines of miniature *wats*, built of bamboo, and containing gifts for the monks. There were hun-



"AN AIR OF FESTIVITY ABROAD."

dreds of them and they made a gay picture against the rich background. They were decorated with bright-colored papers, and were rich with their contents of yellow robes, pillows, mats, cheroots, matches, water jars, and coins suspended from flower trees by binding each with a circlet of cloth. These were all gifts from the people to the monks of the diocese. About sixty *wats* were participating in the ceremonies, so an immense amount of gifts were necessary to go around. Each of the sixty *wats* had a large delegation of monks present. So the shaved head and yellow robe was one of the most conspicuous features of the scene.

We tied our ponies under a tree, and leaving a boy to guard them, started across the court. But before we had taken many steps, a woman came running toward us, and as she approached she fell upon her knees in the manner of an inferior to a superior, and presented us with some plums and flowers, which she bore on a tray made of beaten silver. She was a slave of the Princess B—, and she bore an invitation from her mistress to come to her booth. The princess was well known to the ladies of the party, and we were glad to accept of her hospitality, for we were hot and thirsty, but had we not cared to do so it would have been best to have called long enough to pay our respects to her and her father. The booth was within the monastery wall and under the shade of a large *bo* tree. We discovered that the princess's father was the patron prince of the ceremonies, and that his booth commanded a view of the entire

ground. The princess was affable and talked easily and readily. She told us that the dedicatory services over the idol had already been held, but that none of the crowd had yet begun to disperse nor would they until after the fireworks of the afternoon. She then said in an earnest way that we would have abundant opportunity to make *merit* that day, for so many people were present. Her friendly wish is significant, as it reveals the attitude of monks and leaders towards missionaries at such times. They feel that we are there to make *merit* and continue to think so, even after it is explained to the contrary. They further feel that by allowing us to make *merit*, they in turn will reap *merit*.

We had not been seated long when an abbot announced to the *chau* that all was ready for the reading of the Buddhist scripture. The *chau* replied, jocosely, "Very well, but make it short." The abbot retired, but we first caught his wink to the *chau*, as he said, "Aye, we will." In a few seconds a gong sounded and everyone quickly turned toward the *bo* tree and raised their folded hands in worship. Lighted tapers were placed by the assembly between the fingers of their folded hands and were raised as their heads bowed to the ground. All the while the sonorous tones of the monk as he chanted the sacred words rolled out over the heads of the worshipers and away into the forest beyond. We quietly withdrew, with a prayer in our hearts that this princely family might keep their promise to read the literature we had

given them, and stopped upon the outskirts of the crowd, where all were laughing and chatting and paying no attention to the service at the *bo* tree. Here we could make friends with the peasants from far villages and distribute literature while the service was in progress in the distance. But we were too soon interrupted, as the service was concluded and there burst forth a joyous sound of music and dance. At once there was a general push toward the *wihara* beside which was a stand where musicians were seated playing industriously upon their instruments, while the dancers performed in the center of a large ring made by the crowd. They were all young men, seven in number, and were gayly attired in bright colors. The first movement of the dance was slow and stately and consisted of a sort of prancing step. They went round in a circle, lifting one foot at a time, keeping it suspended high up in the air for several seconds while their arms were outstretched like wings. It looked very comical and absurd to us, but the spectators were enraptured. All the while they chanted songs, which were stories in rhyme, and I am sorry to say were very impure. As the dance progressed the body began more and more to keep time with the music, and soon there was a whirl of figures that beggars description. When a climax in the story or dance was reached, the dancers suddenly stopped and prostrated themselves before the *chau*, who sat in his booth near by. He threw rupees to them, which they scrambled for. The dancers had made *merit* by their per-

formance, and the *chau* now made *merit* by giving them the money. They in turn made additional *merit* by allowing the *chau* to make *merit* upon them. The dance again proceeded, and as we turned to leave, we saw the *chau* and abbot holding their sides with laughter over a joke of the performers that sent us away sick at heart. These jokes were listened to without a blush or sense of shame.

Our talk with a group of villagers beneath a tree was interrupted by loud clashing of gongs which announced that it was time for all present to make their offerings to the monks. The long row of empty baskets was quickly filled with rice, fruit, and sweetmeats of all kinds. The abbot, assisted by a staff, superintended the distribution of the gifts to the representatives of the various *wats*. In the same manner the miniature temples were distributed. The best and richest were stored away within the *wihara* for use of the chapter of the *wat*. The crowd now began to disperse, some drinking and gambling, others watching the dancing, others again listening to the music, while just a stone's throw away a cockfight was a center of interest. About the *chau's* booth was a large concourse of people, watching with awe and admiration all that he and his family did. Groups of "yankee-like" market women were selling their fruits and sweetmeats, and all were gay and happy and chatty, though there was no boisterousness or noisy talk. On the whole the picture presented was more like that of a country fair than of a re-

ligious gathering. There were children everywhere, looking on with wide-open eyes and drinking in eagerly everything, both good and bad.

In the afternoon the services were concluded with fireworks. The name at once brings to mind the grand pyrotechnic displays familiar to every American. But this is a very different affair. It consists of sending off into the air immense rocket-like works, which, as they swiftly ascend, whiz and screech by means of whistles fastened to their side. They leave behind a trail of smoke, and as they reach the limit of their power, they turn and slowly descend to earth again. These rockets are made by the monks, long bamboo poles serving as the foundation. These vary from twelve to thirty or forty feet in length. When finished they are bound with gayly-colored paper, and are carried on the shoulders of men to the ground, where they are to be used. There a temporary booth is erected to receive them and a scaffolding some thirty feet high, is put up from which to send them off. This is done by resting the *bawk-fai*—the rockets—obliquely at an angle of thirty-five degrees upon clasps at the top of the scaffolding. A fuse is held at the lower end by a man, and this monster rocket shoots into the air amid the cheers of spectators, the rattle of drums, and the blessings of monks. It ascends a great height, when it describes a graceful curve and starts upon its downward path. The aim is such as to cause it to fall upon some plain or uninhabited tract of land. This *bawk-fai* exhibit is one of the most popular and highly-

esteemed forms of *merit*, and, as a missionary has laughingly said, it is truly *merit* in its *highest* form. These exhibits mark the closing months of each dry season of the year, and are hailed with delight by the people and with equally marked dread by ponies, who are frightened by the noise and unusual sight of a black, screeching object flying overhead.

The *wats* of the Laos are thoroughly typical of the heart religion they teach. At a distance there is much promise of good. But when near enough to lose the enchantment of distance, one sees how worthless it all is—how inconsistent, how contradictory, and how incoherent! We have but one conclusion to draw from the evidences of Buddhism in Laos, and that is, that it takes more than ethics to make a true religion. There must be a power in the religion that so imbues the whole man as to verily make of him a new creature.

CHAPTER XVI

THE SHAVED HEAD AND THE YELLOW ROBE

THE members of the mendicant order of the *merit*-making monks are supported by the voluntary offerings of the people at an immense cost, variously estimated. They are usually called by writers on Siam "priests," but the word "monk" is more fitting, for priest is too vital a word. They are simply monks, having entered the order to lay up *merit* for themselves, and to minister to others only so far as they care to make additional *merit* for themselves. The idea of intercessor, or leader of the people, is wholly wanting, as much so as that of serving their fellow-creatures.

The vows that bind to the order are nominally for life, but in reality are only for a limited time, or until the maker of the vow wishes to withdraw from the order. This he can do at any time after the first three months. A layman must be eight years old before he can apply for admission to the first order, but usually he is ten or twelve; and he must be twenty years of age before he can be fully ordained and enter the second or full order.

The ceremony of receiving into the order is simple, but would be impressive if conducted with a degree of solemnity due the occasion. The applicant comes to the *wat* gayly dressed, and accompanied by a large concourse of friends as well as by

his family. All are chatting and laughing merrily, for this is a happy occasion. The applicant bears upon one arm his three yellow robes neatly folded. Some member of his family has made special *merit* by making and presenting them to him. In his other hand he bears a gift for the monk in charge of the chapter. The crowd enters the *wihara* in a whirl of decorous gayety, the women seating themselves to one side and the men to the other. The applicant, followed by several of his friends, may, or may not, march around the *wihara* several times, and sometimes there is music to accompany the marching and to add to the festivity. The service must be held within the *wihara*, ten monks, at least, being present, and the superior must be of ten years' standing. The monks are seated in two rows upon the floor in front of the shrine, and the superior is at the head of one of the rows. When the applicant enters the *wihara*, he presents himself before the superior, bowing low and offering his gift as a token of respect. A proposer, who must be a monk, then says, "I present this man who wishes to become a monk." The applicant bows low several times, saying, "Have pity on me, lord, take these robes, and let me be ordained, that I may escape from sorrow and experience Nirvana." The superior then folds the robes around the applicant's neck and he retires to the back of the shrine, is disrobed by a monk, and attired in the yellow robe of the Sacred Order. These must be placed upon the body in a certain way laid down by laws in their code. He then again presents him-

self to the superior and repeats three times the Buddhist formula for the occasion, which has the idea of a sacred trinity—Buddha, Law, Clergy:—

I go for refuge to the Buddha.

I go for refuge to the Law.

I go for refuge to the Order.

He then repeats the Ten Precepts, under which he is to be bound until he leaves the order or is fully ordained, at which time he must be bound by some two hundred or more vows. The Ten Precepts are as follows:—

1. I take the vow not to destroy life.
2. I take the vow not to steal.
3. I take the vow to abstain from impurity.
4. I take the vow not to lie.
5. I take the vow to abstain from intoxicating drinks, which hinder progress and virtue.
6. I take the vow not to eat at forbidden times.
7. I take the vow to abstain from dancing and singing, music and stage plays.
8. I take the vow not to use garlands, scents, unguents, or ornaments.
9. I take the vow not to use a high or broad bed.
10. I take the vow not to receive gold or silver.

It will be noted that the first five of these precepts are those obligatory upon all Buddhists. The applicant has now become a novice, *i. e.*, he has taken the first degree of monastic orders. His duties are to minister to the wants of his superior monks, who have taken full monastic orders, such as bringing their betel boxes, water jars, and food; to attend them when they leave the *wat*; to learn

to read; to beat the monastery drums, and to graciously let the people make *merit* upon him by supplying him with the best of the land.

A novice applying for admission to full orders at the age of twenty must put off the sacred robes and again go through a ceremony similar to the first one. Only, this time, he is subjected to an examination, first in private then publicly in the *wihara*. The questions concern his age and health. Also he is asked if his parents consent; if he is free from debt—often men seek the order to escape debt—if he has ever been bewitched; if he has all his mental faculties; and if he be a slave or fugitive. Other questions of a like nature are asked. If the examination is satisfactory—and it is always so unless there be debt, in which case it is assumed by some one of the applicant's friends in the audience—the superior asks three times if there be any objection to this person being ordained. No one objecting, the applicant is clad in his robe, and the superior declares that he has been duly received and ordained. The services are concluded by the new monk seating himself upon a mat, while his family and friends come up on their knees, present him with gifts and do him homage.

His robe now consists of seven parts. A narrow cloth called a "sweat cloth" is worn next the body. Next a long, deep one is draped about the hips like a tunic. This is girdled in by a narrow scarf; then a sweep of cloth three yards square is draped from one shoulder over the body falling gracefully down to the ankle, and enveloping the arm in a manner

to allow freedom of motion; another large cloth is folded in fan-like plaits and is laid over the left shoulder hanging farther down in the back than the front; then, above all, another girdle is placed which holds the robes firmly though easily. Then a cloth called a "bowing cloth" is caught into the folds for use. This is to protect the monks' faces when they bow to the earth before an idol. This cloth is oftentimes richly ornamented with figures of sacred shrines or royal umbrellas (the double umbrella being an insignia of royalty). If this cloth is so embroidered one will be sure to observe it in passing a monk, for he keeps it carefully folded outwards. A pair of sandals should always be worn.

This yellow cloth is dyed from the sap of the jack tree. The seven cloths should be made of small pieces sewed together in imitation of the patches and rags of the first disciple of Buddha. It is now but a mockery of that humility, for the cloth must be new and fresh looking, and is frequently made of silk. The so-called "yellow" embraces a variety of shades of colors, from a deep orange or chocolate color, through shades of saffron and gold up to the lightest hue of yellow. Thus a monk can indulge his taste and have the different parts of his robe varying one from another.

When a monk leaves the order, he gives his robes to a brother monk. If he dies, the robes are taken from his body before death so as not to be defiled thereby, and are wrapped around the limbs and trunks of *wat* trees. There they remain until

they are decayed, whipped to pieces by the winds, or carried off in bits by industrious nest-builders.

A fully-ordained monk should possess an umbrella and a fan, the former to protect his shaven head from the merciless sun, the latter, his eyes from roving, as the vows of celibacy are upon him. Moreover, in walking his eyes should be fixed upon the ground a few feet before him, and he should be lost in meditation. In fact, the umbrella is most conscientiously carried, while the fan is relegated to a novitiate following. The eyes rove at will, looking for pleasure and diversion, and the lips are ever ready with a joke or jest or pleasantry with all who pass.

Each chapter has a head monk, or superior, and all the *wats* of a diocese look to a *wat luang*, where resides a monk with power over the diocese. These monks or abbots have each a vicar and secretary. The abbot's power is granted by the highest *chau* of the district, who grants it upon promise of the monk to obey his lawful orders. The monk in turn asks the *chau* if he will grant him certain petitions that he might make, and the *chau* acquiescing, the compact is sealed. There are above all the monks one or two who are appointed by the king—the supreme head of Buddhism—and these have very special powers and honors. They report at stated intervals to the king of religious matters throughout the kingdom.

The laws and rules that bind fully-ordained monks are numerous. We will quote a few to illustrate their nature. It will be seen at a glance

how their full observance, good as some are, would kill all energy and virtuous exertion, and how, in seeking to become harmless, a man becomes useless and loses elevation and development of character:—

Boast not your own sanctity.

Do not break up the ground.

Destroy no tree.

Kill no animal.

Drink no intoxicating beverage.

Eat no rice after midday.

Regard not song, dance, or music.

Neither sit nor sleep in a place higher than that occupied by your superior.

Keep neither gold nor silver.

Speak of nothing but religious matters.

Do nothing but what is religious.

Give no flowers to women.

Borrow nothing from secular persons.

Eat not to excess.

Sleep not much.

Sing no gay songs.

Play upon no instrument; avoid sports and games.

Swing not your arms in walking.

Mount no tree.

Bake no brick and burn no wood.

Wink not in speaking and look not round in contempt.

Make no incisions which bring blood.

Buy not, sell not.

When you eat, make no noise like dogs—chibi, chibi, chiabi, chiabi.

Administer no poisonous medicines.

It is an offense to walk in the streets in a non-contemplative mood.

It is an offense to stretch out the feet when sitting.

It is an offense to cultivate the ground—to breed ducks,

fowls, cows, buffaloes, elephants, horses, pigs, or dogs as secular people do.

It is an offense to preach in any but the Pali tongue.

To cook rice is an offense.

To eat anything which has not been offered with joined hands is an offense.

To dream of a woman and to be awakened by the dream is an offense.

To sit on the same mat with a woman is an offense.

It is sinful to receive anything from the hand of a woman.

To speak to a woman in a secret place is an offense.

Seek not pleasure by looking upon a woman.

It is an offense to mount an elephant or a palanquin.

It is an offense to be clothed in costly garments.

To wear shoes which hide the toes is an offense.

It is an offense to covet another man's goods.

To speak injuriously of the earth, of the wind, of fire, or water, or anything else is an offense.

It is an offense not to love everybody alike.

It is an offense to eat anything having life, such as seeds which may germinate.

It is sinful to make an idol.

To employ charms in order to become invulnerable is an offense.

To cough or sneeze in order to win the notice of a group of girls seated is an offense.

Not to put on the garments at break of day is sinful.

To look fiercely at other people is an offense.

To clean the teeth with certain long pieces of wood or while speaking to others is an offense.

To eat and to talk at the same time is an offense.

It is sinful, in thinking of religious matters, to dwell upon that which is not clearly understood without consulting another monk who might give an explanation.

It is an offense to cause alarm to anyone.

A monk offends who in eating slobbers his mouth like a little child.

A monk offends if he eat without crossing his legs.

A monk may not wash himself in the twilight or the dark, lest he should unadvisedly kill some insect or other living thing.

There are many more of these vows, but so degenerate is the order that the monk who endeavors to keep them is hard to find. As a rule the thought seems to be that the joining of the order is of sufficient *merit* without keeping the precepts or vows.

Let us quote from the pen of Mr. Colquhoun in regard to the order as he saw it in Chieng Mai:—

“They—the monks—are seen at all hours, and in every direction, loitering about idly, mixing with the people, sitting in the bazaar, conversing with women, even entering private houses at night, riding elephants, eating after the sun has passed the meridian, devouring flesh, selling what is given for use in the monasteries, and, bowing to the chief and his wife according to native report. Many of them indulge in spirits and cockfighting, and go about with unshod feet, wear gold and jewelry, ‘convert’ bad stones supposed to be precious, into a resemblance of good ones; mix themselves up, to use a Burmese expression, in the affairs of women; and, in fact, do many things that they are strictly enjoined by their rules not to do. At the close of their Lent, which falls in the rainy season and lasts for some three months, they receive grand offerings, selling most of the articles received for the highest prices obtainable. Plays, some of them by no means moral, are constantly given by the people in Lent. And the monks themselves, directly

against their vows, indulge in music, every monastery being well supplied with flutes, cymbals, and drums. On the whole, we were forced to the conclusion that the majority of these monks were idle, good-for-nothing, illiterate, and dissolute men. . . . The monks are supposed to supply the educational wants of the people, but as a matter of fact they do nothing of the kind. They are merely teachers by their example of apathy, laziness, and downright vice; and every year finds them on the downhill road. . . . One day, while paying a visit to one of the dignitaries of the place my host served us some capital European refreshments, and as we sat in the veranda indulging in them and smoking our cheroots, the head monk, a sort of bishop, and a most venerable-looking old man, was introduced. He had just returned from a long journey, and had hastened to pay his compliments to my entertainer. Greatly to my surprise, this light of Buddhism was immediately offered a glassful of rare French brandy. He drank it with the greatest gusto, and then begged that he might be supplied with another."

It is often asked, Why, then, do the people put up with such laxness from the monks? It is because the church and the people are one. The Sacred Order is so dovetailed into the social life that it cannot be separated from it. *Merit! merit!* is the idea of church and of state, not righteousness. If one should point to a drunken priest sitting upon the same mat with a woman, receiving sweetmeats from her hands, and jingling coins in his folded

palm, and should ask for an explanation from some native near by, he would shrug his shoulders and say: "Oh, there are bad monks and good monks, I have nothing to do with that. I am to see to it that I make *merit*. When I give to a monk I make *merit* because I give to him as a monk and not as a man. I have nothing to do with that."

The vast majority of monks remain in the order a year or so, and then marry and settle down to secular life. Doubtless one reason of the superiority of Laos Shans to Siamese Shans is found just here, in that the men do not remain for so long a term of service in the order as they do in Siam. The life of indulgence, idleness, and hypocrisy being thus of a shorter term, its influence is necessarily less baneful.

A monk is supposed to rise before day, bathe, adjust his robe with precision, sweep up his cell, bring drinking water for the day, filter it to prevent the eating of any creatures it might contain, and then sweep around the sacred *bo* tree. As he sweeps he must repeat parts of the sacred law, or else there is no *merit* in the deed. This is often done by a chanting instead of simply reciting. The *merit* consists in the repetition, not in the heart's uplift nor mental activity. He should then retire to meditate until time for breakfast, at which time the Siamese monk slings his begging bowl across his shoulder, covers it with a corner of his robe and goes forth in boat or on foot to collect his daily portion of food. A Laos monk seldom makes this begging tour, and, instead, his food is brought to

the *wat* by *merit*-makers. After breakfast a blessing is pronounced upon the donor, and by so doing *merit* is made for himself. He then washes his bowl, does any little office for his superior, and should retire for meditation and study of the sacred books.

At a little before noon the chapter gathers for another meal, which is a generous one, as no food should be taken again until next day. Probably this law is obeyed more strictly than any other of the order, for a monk may chew betel and smoke and drink instead. The afternoon should be given to meditation and study, and in the evening hour the *wat* park should be swept, the lamps or torches lighted, as well as the waxen tapers about the altar. The chapter then gathers for a vesper service, consisting of praise to Buddha, with prayer that his spirit may inhabit the idol above them forever, and not leave it empty. Later the drums are beaten, sometimes until the midnight hour. All fully-ordained monks should have a rosary. The beads are one hundred and eight in all, each one representing some sacred book or great abbot or the names and *merits* of Buddha. It is great *merit* to remember the whole list. The string is made like a Catholic rosary, without the cross.

As the novitiates are supposed to do all the work of the *wat*, which is, of course, reduced to a minimum, the fully-ordained monks are supposed to spend much more time in meditation and study. In some of the *wat luangs* can be found monks who are fairly good Sanscrit and Pali scholars, and who

are upright in their lives. These scholarly men are always glad to talk with visitors to the *wat*, especially upon scholarly subjects. They like nothing better than a visit from the missionaries. Their tastes are refined and scholarly, and they like to learn, though they do not wish to shake off the shackles which bind to the past. Many warm friendships exist between these rare men, so seldom found, and the missionaries; and great aid is often given by them in translating work done by the mission. If these few men were not Buddhists, they would sway their fellow-countrymen and lead them to a higher and better life. But their faith teaches them that the only way to eradicate the evil in the world is for each individual to cast it out of himself; that a man is only responsible for his own individual self; and if he sees to it that he spends the time in meditation, he has done all that he can do. There is literally no stretching of the hand to a brother. There is no helping of the man who is stumbling. There is no teaching of righteousness; no pointing of the people upward, no yearning to save others. The great founder of the religion who, as we have seen, has come to be worshiped in the development of the system, said when his disciples pressed upon him and pleaded that he might save them, "Nay, though you embrace my knees I cannot save you."

CHAPTER XVII

SPIRIT-WORSHIP AND TREATMENT OF THE SICK

IN the fifth century, there came missionaries from Ceylon into the Laos provinces bearing with them the sacred scriptures of the Buddhists. We might say that these missionaries were very successful, for they were not persecuted and stoned, nor killed, and they had the reward of seeing the people by villages and towns embracing their teachings. How different was the reception and spread of this religion from the true religion which the white-faced missionaries brought fourteen centuries afterwards! The secret lay in the fact that Buddhism was not exclusive while Christianity was; Buddhism allowed its adherents to retain their old system of spirit-worship, while Christianity said, Ye cannot serve two masters. Buddhism simply supplemented the existent faith, adding thereto a moral code and a clerical literature, while Christianity insisted, first, Put off the old man with his deeds. Buddhism built upon the foundation already laid, while Christianity declared, Other foundation can no man lay save that which is laid in Christ Jesus. And so Buddhism flourished and became the nominal religion of the land, save of a few hill tribes here and there. But the old religion brought down with the Shans from the valley of the Yangtsi still lived and ruled men's hearts. Only one feature of it had

to be given up, and that was the taking of animal life to propitiate the evil spirits. This custom was so conflicting with the Buddhist teaching as to the sacredness of life, that it was largely dropped by the people.

Spirit-worship, as existing among the Laos, is not reduced to a system as is Buddhism. It has no temples, but it is enshrined in the heart of every man, woman, and child in the country. So subtle a thing is it that it is difficult to describe; impossible to comprehend if reared under the freedom of Christian influence; and equally impossible of escaping if a Laos born. It acknowledges no god, but gods many, good and bad, more numerous and varied than were those of the ancient Greeks. But little thought is given to the good spirits, if any such exists, but the bad ones have to be propitiated constantly; so constantly that it is just to term this people devil-worshippers. All the monasteries, shrines, and sacred *bo* trees of the land cannot soothe the heart of Laos-land that is trembling 'neath this scourge of demon fear.

This spirit-worship is a modified form of Shamanism, and is almost identical with the *Nat* worship of Western Shans, Kachins, and other mountain tribes bordering on Burma. It is also closely allied to the spirit-worship of the peasant class or Finns of Russia. All unusual occurrences are accounted for as being supernatural; or in other words, they account for all workings of nature outside of the most ordinary by referring to some spirit. If a house is blown down in a storm, the

owner never thinks that it was poorly built or that its posts are beginning to decay, but he cries: "The spirits, the spirits, what have I done to anger the spirits? What must I do to propitiate them? They are now sitting up there in that tamarind tree waiting to pounce upon me or some one of my family. Let us hasten to appease them!" So offerings of food and flowers are placed beneath the tamarind tree with pleadings that the spirits may eat thereof and be refreshed and that they may breathe the perfume of the flowers and be soothed. Spirit-doctors are sent for, who come and with chants and incantations coax the spirits to leave this family alone, and either fly away elsewhere or stay forever in the tamarind tree. Not being sure as to which the spirits may do, offerings of food and flowers and perfumed water are kept beneath the tree until some other mishap diverts the mind to a new set of spirits.

If a man wishes to go on a journey, he first makes a visit to some wise man who has a book containing an astrological table and a lucky day is sought for. The day must properly coincide with the birth of the man, the phase of the moon, and position of certain constellations. The wise man is given a fee, and then the traveler turns his thoughts to the spirits. Offerings are made to them to insure their good will or at least gain their neutrality, and the journey is begun. No exigency of life could induce a man to begin a journey without first going through this preparation. The question may arise, What in case of war? But even

then the officers never move without first consulting a wise man, and making due offerings to the spirits. And the reader may ask, What about the peasant who is summoned by his lord for a journey? In that case, the *chau* himself has held the consultation with the wise man and has made offerings to the spirits. The peasant feels safe under the protection of his lord, but even then he will make a small offering for himself before the journey begins.

When crossing the mountains or passing through the rapids a halt is called and food and flowers are offered to the residing spirits of the place. Often bamboo withes are woven into fancy shapes and hung upon a bush or tree to please the spirits. Another device is made by weaving six flat withes of bamboo into a hexagonal shape, similar to such designs made by kindergarten children. This is called *ta-leo*, and is thought to entangle the spirit when it comes to molest. Thus at the mountain passes one always finds an accumulation of these woven charms swinging in the breeze and looking in the gray of the evening hour quite spectral enough to arouse dread in a credulous people. When traveling with the missionaries, the natives never make these offerings. They are strictly forbidden to do so, for should they allow it, the natives would claim the missionaries' belief in the charm. At first offerings were made when unobserved, but gradually this died away, and now a native does not care to try to propitiate the spirits when in the employ of the missionary. They say,

"The Jesus spirit" is stronger than their evil ones and wards off their attacks. This is a perversion of the truth, but it often leads to a full knowledge thereof.

Children are seen with soot marks upon their foreheads. These are placed there by spirit-doctors and are to ward off evil. They also wear around their wrists charm strings. This belief is by no means confined to the peasantry. The *chaus* and monks hold to it as firmly. The late King of Chiang Mai, the *Chau Chiwit*, who was the last tributary king of the province, had spirit-doctors charm strings and run seven tiers around his palace to keep out the evil spirits that were causing his illness.

If a person falls into the water often no one attempts to rescue him, for the mishap was caused by some angry spirit and its wrath would surely rest upon the rescuer. One of our Laos missionaries, a gifted young woman, was drowned because of this superstition. In bathing she got beyond her depth, and not one of the staring natives dared to go to her assistance. At one time, the dead body of a man floated past our house and caused numerous suppositions, as to the possible cause of his drowning, among the little group watching the scene. One man said that he was evidently a traveler, and his home spirit was angered by his going into another province; that the injured and enraged spirit had pursued him and cast him into the stream as he sat upon the bank resting. Another suggested that he had neglected the usual annual feasting of

the spirits after the crops are harvested, and that this mishap was a natural and just sequence. Still another suggested that the spirit of a former dead wife was jealous of the present wife and had tripped him up as he was entering a boat. And so on, ran the talk, all proving how debased and imbruted was the understanding.

Certain large groves are set aside as being the very special habitation of large hordes of spirits. Offerings are made to these upon the outskirts of the grove, in the hope that the spirits will be content to remain in the grove and not rove abroad. In touring, missionaries sometimes unwittingly pitch tent in such a grove, but they soon have to move, for the villagers will not come to them there. Certain spirits reside over the trees that wild bees inhabit, and if a hunter takes honey therefrom he must make an offering to the spirits to appease probable wrath for disturbing the honey and to insure a yield the next year.

In the summer of 1898 the rains in the Lakawn province were light and varying, and a general failure of rice threatened. The populace were aroused, and much concern was felt, even by the wee children. Evidently the spirits were angry. Why? did not trouble the mind, but how to propitiate them did. The whole people set to work making sweetmeats to carry to the *wats* as offerings to the monks. Probably the god within the *wat* walls, the immense idol, had been neglected, and was angry. And so the gifts poured in to all the surrounding *wats*. *Wat* drums were beaten at

intervals, both day and night. All imaginable kinds of fancy-woven bamboo work were hung aloft on trees. Food and flowers were kept at all the spirit-shrines, and special offerings were placed at bends in the road, upon hilltops, and in recesses of valleys. Thus the people spent of their little substance, and still no rain. So a very special and grand display was planned. On the auspicious day, monks from the *wat luang* of the district carried with pomp and display and imposing pageantry, up and down the roads and streets, a small ivory idol of Buddha which was supposed to possess extraordinary virtues. All day long rolled the beating of gongs as the procession moved about. At twilight the little image was restored to his seat in the *wihara*, and no reproach was cast upon his failure to bring the rain. Instead the people said, "Ah, we have not yet made a sufficient effort to turn the spirits' wrath."

Thus it may be seen that there is no rational perception of natural phenomena, and that the reasoning faculties are necessarily kept in bondage and subjection to the wildest flights of the fancy and imagination. The secrets of nature are not investigated, and no poor Roger Bacon has ever arisen among the people to begin research and prove that natural phenomena are not sorcery and magic.

Every person is believed to have thirty-two good spirits pervading his body, called *kwan*. As long as these *kwan* all remain as guardian spirits within, no sickness or mishap can befall the person. But

alas! these *kwan* are freaky, vacillating spirits, and may leave the body without a moment's warning, and at once sickness or accident befalls. Much time and money are spent trying to keep these *kwan* in a good humor so that they will not desert the body.

Originally all spirits had their origin in human beings, and for lack of *merit* became spirits. Thus deceased monks haunt *wat* grounds and are known as *Pi Süa Wat*; and the deceased kings and officials known as *Pi Süa Ban*, roam over the scenes of their past glories and out of spite work ill for the living. Those who die away from their homes are doomed to rove in the jungles and forests as *Pi Pa*, be they king or slave. These *Pi Pa* spirits are very malignant.

Belief in magic is a necessary consequence of this spirit-worship. Though the Siamese Shans are spirit-worshippers in a very modified form, their superstition leads them to accredit the Laos with this occult power of magic. The Laos, in turn, cannot exactly locate magicians, but certain it is that such exist, and they may be found somewhere among the mountain tribes. These magicians are believed to have the usual powers ascribed to magicians among all the nations who in their infancy or childhood believed in the art. They are accredited with the power of alchemy, but only in a limited degree. Even the rudiments of chemistry are wholly unknown to the people, so they could not attribute its secrets to their magicians. The first principle of alchemy is accredited to them,

namely, that there is a secret whereby the baser metals are transmuted into gold and silver. The magician's power is unlimited so far as working miracles in nature, such as transforming a spirit into an insect which can enter a person and be changed at once into some wild beast which causes death. But it must be borne in mind that these magicians are only creatures of the fancy and the imagination. They never assume tangible form, and so need not be considered as serious an evil as that other form of superstitious belief which is horribly tangible and specific, and of which we will speak presently.

The folk-lore of this people is pregnant with this belief in magic and spirit-worship, and so the children at the knee learn to reverence and fear both, and in after years when the saner reason of maturity would assert itself, this belief has become a habit too deeply ingrained in the mind to be cast aside.

There are believed to be certain magic-wells and springs scattered over the land, the waters of which are for the healing of the people; and other springs which infinitely prolong human life. These springs are undoubtedly believed to exist, but no man can locate the exact spot. When upon the plain, they are to be found in the mountains, and when there, it is necessary to go into the next province, and so on, until one is wearied in endless search. Such a spring was said to exist within a cave at Chieng Dao. Near the opening of the cave ran a stream which was said to be impassable. Beyond it rested

an idol of pure gold, solid, and ten feet high. There were also golden vestments and other wonders, and beyond lay the entrance to the city of the *Yaks*, a fabulous race of giants. To cross the river one must have a great amount of *merit* and no one has ever considered himself as sufficiently possessed with *merit* to undertake the journey.

Several years ago Dr. McGilvary entered the cave with a native Christian and discovered that the stream could be forded and that beyond stretched a fine cave, but utterly lacking in any fixtures that would be a foundation for the popular belief. But this discovery did not disconcert the natives. They said that the party had sufficient *merit* to cross the stream, but not to behold the wonders within!

Faith in amulets is necessarily embraced in this superstition. Divination, as has been seen, is believed in and much stress is laid upon omens. The popular American superstitions in regard to Friday being an unlucky day for the beginning of a task and the breaking of a mirror signifying seven years of misfortune would find themselves completely lost amid the myriad of Laos omens. All of these arts are merely in a rudimentary form, not one of them reaching the height of like arts in the Middle Ages.

Many forms of disease are thought to be caused by evil spirits. All diseases fall under one of two classes. The first embraces the simpler ailments that flesh is heir to, and result from a disturbance of the equilibrium in the body of the four elements, wind, fire, earth, and water. The second includes

all the more serious disorders that are not understood by the people, and are so thought to be caused by offended spirits.

The first class may be treated by simple home remedies, such as massage, in which art the native women are skilled; dieting, or the drinking of teas made from herbs and roots of medicinal shrubs. If a person has pain in the side or abdomen, a second person comes to the rescue by kneading the abdomen with the feet. This is sometimes done by the patient lying flat on the back with flexed knees along the side of the veranda-railing. The friend leans back upon the railing and partly supports her weight with her arms upon the rail, while her feet knead the abdomen. I have seen this process kept up for half an hour, a bright cheery conversation between the two going on all the time. An occasional "oh" would be the only sign of discomfort.

If the case is more serious, a doctor must be called. These doctors are much venerated by the people, though not considered infallible, as the following proverb will show: "An elephant, though he has four legs, may slip; and a doctor is not always right." They are men of owl-wisdom looks, but are not graduated from any school of medicine, and as some one has said, "They just take to doctoring naturally." There are several large volumes in the language—written upon palm leaves—which may be termed medical books. They treat of the mysteries of the four elements, wind, fire, earth, and water, and they give a number of

prescriptions after the order of the following one, which is for snake bite:—

A piece of the jawbone of the wild hog.

A piece of the jawbone of a tame hog.

A piece of the jawbone of a goose.

A piece of the jawbone of a peacock.

The tail of a fish.

The head of a venomous snake.

This is compounded and given in water, often amounting in bulk to from one to two quarts. If the patient dies, it only proves that an insufficient quantity of the drug was taken.

This is very serious truth, and is applicable to all classes. For instance, the mission physician of Lakawn was sent for to come quickly to *Chau B—*, as he was seriously ill. When the physician arrived the *chau* was stretched upon a mat and beside him were vessels from which he had been draining pints of liquid. At his head sat a doctor with lips pursed blowing gently but steadily upon the very top of the *chau's* head. The *chau* explained that "wind" was his trouble, that it had entered his side sharply and had since been coursing up and down his body; that so long as the doctor blew upon his head, the wind ceased its rushing course, and already much of it had passed out of his left foot. This man the week before had been conversing with several foreigners upon the great political problems which were then shaking England and America, and he showed a good understanding of the situation. He was a subscriber to the weekly Bangkok papers printed largely in Siamese, and

was conversant with all the world problems of the day. Yet, behold him lying there with his "wind" coursing up and down his body and going out of his left leg!

These doctors have no definite knowledge of the organs and functions of the body. No experimental investigations or patient observations have ever been made by them. One mission physician attests: "It is doubtful if he—the doctor—has, either by intelligent experiment or by accident, arrived at one solitary verifiable fact, either in physiology or therapeutics." The same general treatment is given for various diseases. The medicinal draught is compounded of the teeth, blood, and gall of the bear, tiger, crocodile, rhinoceros, and elephant, mixed with egg shells, herbs, and powdered roots of certain trees, until the mixture may contain two hundred ingredients. "Besides their specific curative properties, these medicines impart the courage of the tiger, the stability, dignity, and longevity of the elephant, the solemnity and tranquillity of the crocodile, the equanimity, contentment, and philosophic indifference to external things and other virtuous characteristics of the rhinoceros." This powder is steeped in water and given in quantities varying from a half pint to a half gallon at a time, according to the patient.

When called to a patient, the doctor remains in the house until the patient improves, at which time the doctor is given a fee and dismissed, or until it is decided to call another doctor, in which case, doctor No. 1 receives no pay; neither is he paid

should the patient die. Thus the doctor's bread depends upon his curing the patient. And so tenacious of life is the human body that a large number of the sick recover under such treatment. I went to see a poor suffering woman at one time who had a most acute attack of appendicitis. She was suffering all the agonies that accompany the disease. I heard her groans and cries at intervals long before I reached the gate. She lay in a heap upon her mat clasping her knees in a tight grip of pain. Beside her sat a doctor with a bowl in his hand containing a fluid into which he was blowing his breath by pursing the lips. When the water was sufficiently charmed, he dabbed it upon her side and abdomen, chanting in weird monotone all the while. Think of such treatment for appendicitis! And, then, mark ye, the woman recovered. But you may say, the case probably was not appendicitis. However, it was so declared by our station physician who was called in and then dismissed because he did not work a miracle.

One other highly-esteemed remedy must not be overlooked. It is as simple as wonderful, consisting merely in the virtue stored up in a warm, newly-laid egg. If such an egg is rubbed by a doctor over the affected parts of the body, it has great curative powers. Care must be exercised to hold the egg "just so," and the movement over the body must be accompanied by the repetition of charmed verses.

There is no sharp line of demarcation between the first and second class of diseases as many forms

of diseases which fall under the first head are treated as such, and yet thought to be caused by spirits. For instance, rheumatism, which is a common disease and caused by an excess of earth in the joints, is treated by the regular doctors and yet is also thought to be caused by a swamp-spirit. If the attack is severe a spirit-doctor is called who treats the case by holding his immense bladed knife, compared with which a carving knife is innocent, over the affected part and drawing it up and down the flesh, at the same time commanding the spirit to return to its former abode. If a doctor is not available some venerable person can treat the case, though the results will be more doubtful. In cases of fever, the regular course is gone through under the direction of the doctor, still the family of the patient makes tiny craft and places upon them offerings of food and flowers, which are sent off downstream hoping to decoy away the fever spirit. During the Buddhist Lent, which is a sickly season, many families hang lanterns aloft over their houses each night, thus lighting the spirits over their dwellings so that they may not wander down into the houses and molest the inmates. Yet these diseases mentioned and many others cannot fall rightly under the second class, for the "spirit" element in them is too vague and theoretical. This second class is decidedly specific. The diseases falling within it are thought to be caused by the spirit of some person entering the body and "bewitching" it, causing illness and death unless expelled. This can properly be classed un-

der the name witchcraft. The diseases of this class are those which the natives do not at all understand, such as delirium, lunacy, epileptic seizures, hysteria, variations of surface temperature, and other nervous affections. The spirit of these diseases is termed *pi ka*, and the treatment is a specialty. The doctors are termed spirit-doctors and are much esteemed by the natives.

When a person is supposed to be possessed by a *pi ka*, the spirit-doctor comes and with much ceremony and many mysterious signs and movements, and after several draughts of arrack, seats himself upon a mat beside the patient, and begins his exorcisms. He uses either a light cane for flogging, emphasized with pinches by the fingers, or else employs a tiger's tooth which latter is the most popular and effectual. The tooth is scratched over the flesh, leaving in its wake little trails of blood, all the while the doctor chanting incantations which give a very decided "tone" to the proceedings. The patient writhes and twists in pain, but the suffering is not considered as inflicted upon the patient, but the *pi ka*, and any words uttered by the subject are considered as coming from the spirit. When at some point in the running course of the tooth the patient cries out, the spirit is located, and the tooth probed into the flesh, the doctor demanding in loud tones that the spirit give its name. Such treatment usually brings momentary consciousness to even the delirious. And the patient for some one of several reasons utters the name of a person against whom there is a dislike or family grudge,

or if neither exists, the name of some unpopular person in the neighborhood is uttered. Questions are then asked so as to certainly identify the person, and then strings are tied around the thumbs of the patient binding them together and the big toes in the same way, and also a string is tied around the neck. This is to keep the *pi ka* within the body. And so ends the first stage of the investigation.

It is very probable that the Laos mind is so ingrained with this belief that in such a case the patient would give the name of some person, believing himself that it was the *pi ka* within speaking, and not his own true self. And really between the Buddhist teaching of no soul and still reincarnation; and their faith in spirits and magic; and the natural puzzles of the mind regarding the hidden life within; it is no wonder that a fevered brain should be doubtful as to its identity.

The next step is to send for the accused witch, or some member of the immediate family, who cuts the strings, thus liberating the *pi ka*, which returns to the body of the witch. In time the patient recovers, if indeed he does not die from having been torn internally by the spirit when it left the body, or by its having eaten too much of the viscera of its victim. The property of the family of the witch is all destroyed and burned, and they are driven and stoned away from their home and people, and are forever branded as *pi kas*. The poor unfortunates either huddle together in villages of their own, or else flee to some

distant province, where they hope to lose their past identity and begin life anew. Such occurrences are not rare, but, on the contrary, are frequent; so that each year many hundreds are thus driven from their homes. This is a dark blot upon the fair name of the Laos; but before we cast our stones, let us remember how in England, as late as 1664 the just and intellectual Sir Matthew Hale, who ranked as the foremost man of the nation, condemned to death two women for bewitching children, and supported his actions and belief by long and learned arguments based upon both theology and metaphysics. Let us also remember the Salem witchcraft, and then let us drop the stones and determine that as we now have the Light of Truth, we will not rest until its beams shine from bound to bound of this Laos-land.

One would think that accused witches would know that the accusations were false, but they do not always, as the following occurrence will illustrate: A mother and several daughters were branded as witches. They were all rather above the medium in stature, so that in looks they differed slightly from the masses. They approached the nearest witch village, thinking to take up their abode there, and find shelter in some house until able to go to the forest, cut timber, and build for themselves. But when the witches of the village saw them approaching, they threw up their hands and exclaimed, "Oh, but these are witches, truly, truly!" and, picking up sticks, they drove them away.

As has been stated in a preceding chapter, these *pi kas* sometimes take refuge under the mission roof. The popular belief at such a time is that so long as on the mission compound the *pi ka* in the person is in subjection to the "Jesus spirit," and so no harm can be wrought by them to the missionaries. Usually they are thought to leave the body of the witch, and, climbing up some tree near the gate, await the going forth of the witch, to market or elsewhere, when they climb down and enter the body again.

Often, in cases of uncertainty as to what may be the trouble with a sick person, a medium is called in. These mediums are always women, as the spirit-doctors are men. They sit in state upon a mat, and are given every attention by the waiting, expectant family. If possible, a native band of musicians is obtained, who perform the whole time. Arrack is offered the medium and is partaken of freely. When it begins to animate her, she sways and chants improvised incantations, until she is seized by a spirit of inspiration and becomes frantic in her gestures and movements, at which point the music swells to a tumult. Questions are then asked as to what may be the trouble with the sick, and what course must be pursued to amend matters. The shrewdness of the medium, combined with her own probable belief in her powers, enables her to give satisfactory answers, and she informs as to what spirits have been offended and how to propitiate them; or, if the case be mere sickness, she gives them a pre-

scription instead. If the person grows worse, the case is evidently one beyond the medium's control, and so the spirit-doctor is sent for.

This belief in witchcraft is often used by the ruling class to forward selfish interests or to wreak their vengeance upon an offending family, thus taking a mean advantage through the aid of a superstition that they themselves believe in.

The awful shadow cast over Laos life by these superstitions is simply indescribable. The people are religiously like frightened children in the dark. They call and cry to one another, but are only the more frightened by the sounds and echoes of one another's voices, and in their gropings they start and scream as they touch one another, deeming it a devil instead of a friend. They stumble, they reel to and fro, they fall and cry out in a death agony that they would rather abide in the present known evil than to be launched into the future unknown.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE ORGANIZATION AND EARLY DAYS OF THE MISSION

"And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."

WE have seen that the Laos, though a simple, comparatively happy people in their social lives, are pitifully helpless and sinful spiritually. The same condition of sin and suffering that brought Christ down from heaven to earth twenty centuries ago exists in Laos to-day. They do not need to be given a religion of good morals and good ethics alone, for they have that already. What they need is a Saviour from sin, a Power to keep from sin. They look up to no God, and they have no vision of his purity that they might hate their own heinousness. Sin has wrapped its bands about the people, and they love it, though they fear it. The scourge of this fear drives them to deeds of *merit* that they may escape a worse fate in the dread unknown. To the Christian there can be no doubt that the Laos need Christ.

There is perhaps no age in the history of the world that has been so thoroughly practical as is this one. The mind demands figures and facts. The old saying that "an ounce of fact is worth a ton of theory" expresses the popular sentiment. And so I am glad that this demand for the tangible,

for facts and figures, can be met in connection with Laos-land and its need for Christianity, and its response to its teachings. A few years ago faith alone could attest it, but now facts can be added thereto. It is my purpose in the succeeding chapters to give some of the evidences of Christianity among the Laos, showing that when this people come face to face with God and a personal Saviour and a Power to keep from sin they become verily new creatures, a savor of life in the community and nation, and the hope for all the problems that gather about the redemption of the land from its state of lethargy and sin.

The Laos Mission is an outgrowth of the mission to the Siamese, and that mission is a result of the desire to establish a mission among the Chinese. In those early days, when the doors of China were barred and sealed to the world, men and women of God waited at Singapore and Bangkok and other places, studying the Chinese language with the Chinese residents of those ports, and waiting for the first opportunity to enter into the Celestial Empire.

As far back as 1662, the Church of Rome established its missions among the Siamese. The facts of the case sadly prove that the mission was not worthy of the name Christian, for, instead of maintaining the high standards which the Catholic Church holds in Protestant countries, she sank to the level of the heathen about her. Instead of raising them up to Christ, they dragged her down to mammon. The mission flourished temporarily,

but got into numberless troubles with the government and officials by its trying to interfere with established laws, and its desire to receive official recognition. But it must be acknowledged that a few of the members of its mission were earnest, humble, devout men, actuated by the true missionary spirit. They were, however, unable to sway the majority of their brethren and to instill their principles into the mission policy. The renowned Dr. Carl Gutzlaff, upon visiting Bangkok in 1828, wrote that he found that the "servility and moral degradation of the Christians—Siamese converts—had inspired the Siamese with such a contempt, not only for the religion, but for the civilization and power of all Europeans, that they only began to change their minds upon finding that British arms had actually defeated and conquered Burma, which is on the very border of Siam itself." Thus was born a dislike and scorn of the white-faced foreigner and his religion. But a while after the establishment of Protestant missions we find the following official document written by royal sanction:—

"Many years ago, the American missionaries came here. They came before any Europeans"—ignoring the Jesuits, and referring to the large number of European merchants and traders who flocked to the port so soon as it has been opened by the missionaries—"and they taught the Siamese to speak and read the English language. The American missionaries have always been just and upright men. They have never meddled in the

affairs of government or created any difficulty with the Siamese. They have lived with the Siamese just as if they belonged to the nation. The Government of Siam has great love and respect for them, and has no fear whatever concerning them. When there has been a difficulty of any kind, the missionaries at many times have rendered valuable assistance. For this reason, the Siamese have loved and respected them for a long time. The Americans have also taught the Siamese many things."

Of later date, 1899, we have the following testimony from the government to the work of Protestant missions in Siam. We quote from the Hon. Hamilton King, U. S. Minister to Siam:—

"At a recent banquet given by the Russian Minister in honor of Prince Dăm-rōng on his return from an extensive trip of inspection throughout the kingdom, I had the real pleasure of hearing the following words: 'Mr. King, I want to say to you that we have great respect for your American missionaries in our country, and appreciate very highly the work they are doing for our people. I want this to be understood by everyone, and if you are in a position to let it be known to your countrymen, I wish you would say this for me. I have now more especially in my mind my visit to Chieng Mai, Laos. The work of your people there is excellent. I cannot say too much in praise of the medical missionaries there, especially.'"

These quotations are significant. They prove that the old dislike of the foreigner and the "Chris-

tian" has been overcome, and that the Government is not now antagonistic to Protestant missionaries, though they teach a different religion and insist that, Other foundations can no man lay save that which is laid in Christ Jesus. It is also significant in showing that if God has thus turned the hearts of the rulers to favor his servants, the home church should push forward to meet the new responsibilities and privileges opened up to them in this field. We do not have to stand waiting for open doors in Siam and among the Laos, for they are on every side, inviting entrance.

Siam owes much to Dr. Gutzlaff, for besides his own arduous labor for the people the few years he was there, he sent appeals to America and to Dr. Judson, of Burma, that Protestant missions should be established there at once. He and his associate, the Rev. Mr. Tomlin, of the London Missionary Society, could not remain in Bangkok, as their society felt that they could not then establish their work there. Both of these men had their faces set toward China. "But the American trading-vessel commanded by Captain Coffin, which in 1829 brought to this country the famous 'Siamese Twins' brought also an earnest appeal for aid in evangelizing that then almost unknown land of their birth." The appeal was written by Dr. Gutzlaff, and in response the American Board, followed by others, began work there. So we might say that Protestant mission work was first organized in the early thirties of the last century. Several Boards worked there for many years, but

ultimately, under principles of mission comity, all the Boards withdrew, and left the field in charge of the Presbyterian Board in the United States of America.

The Providence of God in the attitude of the government towards mission work is marked. When Chau Fa Mongkut, the father of the ruling king, Chulalongkorn, was a mere youth, his throne was usurped and he fled to a monastery and entered the Sacred Order. While a monk in this monastery, the Rev. Jesse Caswell, of the American Board, became especially interested in him and had his heart stirred to work especially with the young prince. He devoted a year and a half to instructing him four times a week, one hour each lesson, in English and the western sciences. The triune God was constantly held up to him, and though he never renounced Buddhism to become a professed follower of Christ, the influence of Mr. Caswell's teaching was never lost. For twenty-seven years this prince dwelt quietly within the *wat*, studying hard for an Eastener and ever seeking instruction from the missionaries.

In 1851 the days of the Siam Mission were dark and ominous. Prince Fa Mongkut was still in the *wat*, and the usurper, who was despotic, selfish, and adverse to everything foreign, had so insulted and mortified the English Ambassador, the celebrated Sir James Brooke, "Rajah Brooke," who had come to Bangkok to try to establish treaty relations, that he weighed anchor and returned to England, breathing out threatenings of

gunboats and powder. The American Ambassador had also been repulsed, not having been able to gain even an audience. War seemed imminent, and the missionaries were advised to retire temporarily. They considered the matter and decided to remain. Before any official action could be taken by the foreign government to force Siam to open her ports to the world, the usurper died and "entered into Nirvana."

The Prince Fa Mongkut was placed upon the throne and at once began a new era for Siam. His intimate relations with the missionaries during his many years of seclusion had prepared him to rise above the prejudices and traditions of his nation in a marked degree. And so when, in 1855, Sir John Bowring appeared to negotiate for treaty rights, he was warmly received and had every mark of reverence and distinction laid upon him by the king. In less than a month's time, the papers were all signed that were to open Siam to the world, and that were to be precedents for the subsequent treaties of other nations. Thus can be understood the meaning of the words of the late ex-regent: "Siam has not been disciplined by English and French guns like China, but the country has been opened by missionaries."

His majesty, besides encouraging mission work, especially the educational and medical branches, employed an English governess for his children. One of the group of little ones taught by this English lady, Mrs. Leonowens, is the present ruling king. King Mongkut requested, in a gracious

note to the mission, that the wives of the missionaries would undertake to teach the secluded ladies of his palace. This they willingly and gladly did, and three ladies, representatives of the three missions in the field, namely, Mrs. Bradley, Mrs. Mattoon, and Mrs. Jones, began the task of teaching in the palace harem. It is interesting to note that this is the first record of zenana teaching that we have, for the India zenana work was not begun until a few years later, 1857. The class was composed of twenty-one of the thirty wives of his majesty and several of his royal sisters. For various urgent reasons the work had to be suspended after only a few years of encouraging life.

It has been stated that the Siam mission developed from Bangkok's having been used as a strategic point in the occupancy of China. But many years before the first Protestant missionary touched the shores of this land, a woman had made an effort to bring the Siamese to a knowledge of God, and on this wise. To quote from Dr. House of the Siam mission:—

“It is an interesting fact, that the very first effort made by any of the Protestant faith for the spiritual good of the people of Siam was by a woman. This was Ann Hazeltine Judson, of sainted memory, who had become interested in some Siamese living at Rangoon where she then resided. In a letter to a friend in the United States, dated April 30, 1818, she writes: ‘Accompanying is a catechism in Siamese, which I have just copied for you. I have attended to the Siamese language for about a year

and a half, and, with the assistance of my teacher, have translated the Burman catechism—just prepared by Dr. Judson—a tract containing an abstract of Christianity and the Gospel of Matthew into that language.’ The catechism was printed by the English Baptist mission press at Serampore in 1819, being the first Christian book ever printed in Siamese.”

On June 20, 1858, the Rev. and Mrs. Jonathan Wilson and the Rev. Daniel McGilvary arrived in Bangkok as reinforcements to the mission. As these young men were to become the pioneers of our Laos mission we will glance at their lives previous to their coming to Siam. They had been roommates at Princeton Seminary and while there they dedicated their lives to foreign mission work. It will be remembered that at this time that prince of men, John Leighton Wilson, was Secretary of the Presbyterian Board. It was his custom to visit annually the “schools of the prophets” and lay before the students the great needs of the heathen world. In the closing months of 1855, when he visited Princeton, he laid especially the claims of Siam before the students. It was then a new and most needy field. Three members of that senior class offered themselves for that field, namely, Messrs. McGilvary, Wilson, and J. A. Lefevre. None of the three were physically strong men and ultimately Dr. Lefevre had to abandon all hope of going. He spent his life as pastor of the Franklin Square Presbyterian Church of Baltimore, and is one of the ablest theo-

logians and preachers of the generation that is passing away.

After graduating, Dr. Wilson spent some time laboring successfully at Spencer Academy, Indian Territory, part of the time working among the Choctaw Indians. Dr. McGilvary came South to his native State of North Carolina and took charge of a church in Orange Presbytery. He was ordained by that presbytery December 13, 1857, at Pittsboro, Chatham County. But neither looked upon their work other than temporary. And so in 1858, when their general health had much improved, they were accepted by the Board and appointed as missionaries to Siam. Before he sailed Dr. McGilvary visited his friend, Dr. Lefevre, in Baltimore, in company with Dr. J. Leighton Wilson, to see if it were possible for him to go. But "general debility and some hereditary pulmonary troubles" would not allow him to undertake such a work, and so the two friends had to sail without him March 9, 1858. In the annual report of the board of that year we find these words: "In the case of both these brethren, it was some degree of uncertainty as to health that led to the delay in their being sent out. This doubt, it is believed, has been removed; and the committee trust that their lives and health will be spared for many years of missionary work in Siam." How abundantly and wonderfully has God fulfilled this hope! That was forty-four years ago, and both these men are still living upon the field, not as retired veterans, but as active missionaries. It was the following

May that the outgoing of Messrs. Wilson and McGilvary was reported to the General Assembly, which met that year in New Orleans, in Dr. B. M. Palmer's church.

In April, 1860, Mrs. Wilson succumbed to an attack of cholera, which was then prevalent in Bangkok. She lingered until July, when, after all her labors and her suffering, in peace she fell on sleep, with words of rapture and joy upon her lips.

The following November Dr. McGilvary was married to Miss Sophia R. Bradley, the eldest daughter of the Rev. D. B. Bradley, M. D., of the American Missionary Association. She was a young woman of rare abilities, possessing a combination of gifts and attainments which most admirably fitted her to become the wife of the future pioneer missionary to the Laos. In 1861, Dr. and Mrs. McGilvary, with the Rev. S. G. McFarland, D. D., were transferred from Bangkok to Petchaburee—the city of diamonds—to establish a work there and lay the foundations of the station. Dr. Wilson remained in Bangkok and was especially successful in his colporteur work, which he faithfully carried on within the city and in the suburbs.

Near Petchaburee was a large colony of Laos, numbering ten thousand or more. They had fled from their far-away home to the northeast, many years before, when their leader had been defeated in battle. They had been made serfs of the king, and he had assigned them homes and lands in the fertile province about Petchaburee. Dr. McGil-

vary became interested in this people, and the annual coming of boats from the "north land" to Bangkok to trade increased this interest, and he purposed in his heart to penetrate into their far-away country and see if a mission could not be established there. The Siam mission granted his earnest plea, and in the cool season of 1863 he and his friend, Dr. Wilson, pushed up into the unknown stretch of country to the north of them and in the name of Jehovah entered the mountain doors of the land. At that time the Laos provinces were simply tributary to Siam, and so these two men sought the presence of the king of the provinces who resided in the capital city of Chieng Mai. The king and his wife were glad to see the foreigners, and thinking that some material gain would accrue from their coming, they warmly welcomed them and invited them to come and establish a mission there. After further investigations, and with a promise from the king of a lot for a residence, they turned their faces southward with hearts aglow with hope. The Siam mission laid the matter before the home Board and it was decided to establish a mission there as soon as possible.

In 1864, the health of Dr. Wilson was so much impaired that it became necessary for him to have a rest and change, and so he sailed for America. When he returned he was accompanied by his fair bride who was destined to be his helper for many years of fruitful labor.

The year 1867 is memorable as marking the establishment of the mission to the Laos. On the

3d of January, 1867, Dr. and Mrs. McGilvary and their children embarked in one of the little Laos boats described in a previous chapter. They left with the prayers and the blessings of their collaborators resting upon them, and how sorely they should need just those prayers and those blessings they well knew, but their hearts failed not. The water was fast falling, for the dry season was well under way. It was also the beginning of the intensely hot season, but those things they counted not. If they did not go right then, the trip would have to be postponed almost a year—and a year! What might that mean for the Laos? By agreement, Dr. and Mrs. Wilson were to join them the following year.

It is well to note here that the Roman Catholic Church had previously made an effort to establish a mission in the country, and with this end in view had sent their M. Graudjean, a priest, into the provinces to investigate. After a few months he returned and reported that the people would not receive his message, but laughed at him, and, so to use his own expression, "I shook the dust from off my feet and returned."

The months of January, February, and March were spent in the little boat upon the river, and not until April 1 did they sight the city that was to be the home of their adoption. Of this trip Dr. McGilvary modestly wrote to the Board: "We would record with devout gratitude to God his watchful care over us during our long and tedious and somewhat dangerous voyage." Upon reach-

ing the city he found that the king was away fighting the Red Karens, and no lot could be obtained for residence. So he moved his family to one of the *salas* of the city, and in his choice of one among so many he was surely led of God, as after events proved.

The king did not return until well into the rainy season, so arrangements to remain in the *sala* had to be made. Dr. McGilvary bought bamboo and matting and built a small room to one side of the *sala*. This afforded comparative protection from the rains. It must be borne in mind that a *sala* is simply an open pavilion built by *merit*-makers for the abode of travelers. This *sala* was low, being only a few feet from the ground, whereas six or seven feet is the usual height. The location was also low. And so the mud beneath and in the yard about was often a foot deep for weeks at a time. To offset this, the building was upon the principal highway of the city leading across the river bridge. The advantage of this location will be seen presently. The season was intensely hot and very sickly, and Dr. McGilvary distributed more quinine the first two months than had been used at Petchaburee in six years. The first medicine given to a native by Dr. McGilvary was some quinine for fever. He had to pay the man to induce him to take the drug. After several such cases the fear of the *ya kau*, "medicine white," wore off, and the people flocked to be supplied with it, so much so that in a little while the supply that was expected to last a year was exhausted. A few bottles were,

of course, reserved for emergencies and use in his own family.

Dr. McGilvary had received no medical education; but all missionaries should, and all pioneer missionaries must, know something about medicine. As our story will prove, this missionary was of the highest order, being sprung from a sturdy Scottish stock, renowned for intellect and for the zeal and brightness of its faith. He had by application acquired considerable knowledge of medical science, and all through his life of active evangelistic work, he has traveled with his Bible in one hand and his medicine case in the other. "Preach the gospel—heal the sick."

On the day after the king's return from his warfare Dr. McGilvary called to pay his respects. The king was not in the best of humor, for he had suffered great loss of life, and on the whole the expedition had proved a failure. Nevertheless, he gave Dr. McGilvary a kindly welcome, and again promised him a lot. Soon after this, the king did make over a lot to the mission in good faith. The lot was within the city and was well located upon the principal highway, running from the bridge through the principal gate of the city. No thought was then given to building, for the rains were steady, and it was impossible to either gather material or to build. And so the months slipped by, the days being filled with ceaseless toil. The open public *sala* made the missionaries accessible to the people and assured Dr. McGilvary of an audience from morning till night and often well into the

evening hours. These people came from far and near, many being travelers from distant provinces.

All this time both Dr. and Mrs. McGilvary had to give themselves to the study of the language, and here the wife had the advantage. Siamese was the childhood tongue of Mrs. McGilvary, for her parents were among the pioneer missionaries to Bangkok. This Siamese enabled them to converse with the people, but they wished to come into closer touch and speak their own vernacular, and so they applied themselves to language-study. Part of the time they had a man employed to assist them, and to copy tracts, but in the main, they were thrown upon their own resources. Dr. McGilvary speaks thus of those days: "While the field is open the work is great and arduous. We have come beyond all the influence and ordinary means of civilization, except the great one that it is our privilege to bring with us, the gospel of Christ. We have no press, no schools, no commerce, no European society." They were even far removed from the touch of their brethren in Bangkok.

After the first year, this pioneer family was cheered and strengthened by the coming of Dr. and Mrs. Wilson. Soon after their arrival they moved into the little bamboo house, which had been built upon the mission lot, and it was decided that Dr. McGilvary should remain in the *sala* until he could obtain a new lot and build.

About this time thousands of strangers were brought to Chiang Mai under *corvée* laws to help

rebuild the river bridge. These men were kept for a few days only, when new relays took their places. Because of the situation of the *sala* Dr. McGilvary was surrounded by the camp of these workmen. Every evening for several months he held services in the *sala*, and oftentimes inquirers remained until past midnight, asking questions and listening unto the great truths of the new religion, until sheer exhaustion drove the laborers to seek rest. Dr. McGilvary felt keenly the lack of literature to give inquirers. They had Siamese books, but the Laos written character is wholly different from that of the Siamese, and only a man here and there could be found to read it. It was pitiful to see an earnest inquirer start off for his distant home with only the first glimmer of truth in his heart. Many said they would pray no more to their idols, but to the great God, and that they would keep the Sabbath day. There was at that time no report to make to the home church of conversions and baptisms, but to this day the seed-sowing done in those months is bringing forth fruit.

It was two years from the date of leaving Bangkok by Dr. McGilvary, until he and Dr. Wilson baptized their first convert on January 3, 1869. It was a little after that time that Dr. McGilvary moved into a bamboo mission house upon a lot furnished by the king. At this same time we find a letter written by Dr. McGilvary, from which we quote in part:—

“The only estimate that some people can make of the influence of missionary work is in the sum-

ming up the figures of conversions and baptisms. This is necessarily small at first. . . . A double process is to be carried on. A double work to be accomplished just as if we were to be required to rear an edifice on the grounds occupied by some ancient stronghold. . . . Hath a nation changed its gods? Yet, difficult as this is, it is the first thing to be done; it is what we demand of the heathen as an indispensable prerequisite toward embracing the gospel. Many, many of them would love to combine the two—to lift up the hand and offer a flower to the name of Jesus and Buddha—as many in Christian lands would combine the service of God and mammon. . . . In the necessity of uprooting the deep foundations of old systems more consonant to our fallen, depraved nature, we have all the influence of custom to overcome when custom in everything is law.” Among the encouragements to the work he enumerated the following:—

“1. Buddhism is not held so strictly as in Siam. It is not strange to see a monk eating rice in the afternoon, or handling money, or sitting or talking with a woman, and many other similar violations of the commands of their idol god, which if done openly in Bangkok, would forfeit his position in the order.

“2. The door is open. The people are accessible. The king is friendly, as are also the princes and officers of the government.

“3. The people seem more disposed to look up to foreigners than most other eastern nations. They warmly receive the missionaries at their houses,

while their own homes are frequented with visitors of all ranks.

"4. As a race they have more of the elements of a manly character than most Asiatics."

All the letters of Dr. McGilvary written during the first two years at the *sala* to the home church and to the Board, were burdened with one plea, "Brethren, pray for us." As for himself he lived in a constant atmosphere of prayer. Many of the scenes in the *sala* were like to those of Jacob at Penuel. He did not plead for one or two, but for the "whole Laos race." His love was great, his faith was greater, and when the first convert, Nan Inta, was baptized, he pleaded that "the little one might become a thousand." To-day he looks upon a Laos church two thousand five hundred strong and he looks with his faith still claiming the whole Laos race.

Foundations mean much, and who will gainsay that those of the Laos mission were well laid?

CHAPTER XIX

THE FIRST GROWTH AND PERSECUTION

NAN INTA was baptized on January 3, 1869, and in seven months six more had received the ordinance, and the little native church numbered seven souls. They were all men and four of the seven had first come to the missionaries for medicines. Nan Inta was a man of middle life, having passed two score and nine years. He was a man of rare abilities, possessing those qualities which forced him to be a leader of men. As his title, Nan, implies, he had taken full monastic orders. He first came to Dr. McGilvary for medicines, and, of course, heard the gospel message from him. He was favorably impressed with it, and promised that he would come again, which promise he kept. In time he was employed by Dr. McGilvary and Dr. Wilson, because of his superior knowledge and abilities, to assist them with the language and in the copying of catechisms and portions of Scripture. Though so closely identified with the missionaries, he remained a staunch supporter of his religion. It was not until the great solar eclipse of August 16, 1868, that he was aroused. Dr. McGilvary had predicted its occurrence to him and had explained the phenomenon scientifically. Nan Inta only shook his head and said that it was impossible; that the *Paw Kru*, "father teacher," had

been deceived in the matter. But Dr. McGilvary saw to it that he understood the day and the hour of the occurrence, and then he gave himself to prayer. At the appointed time the eclipse occurred, which was a total one in lower Siam, and almost so in the Laos country. Nan Inta was amazed. Could his sacred books have deceived him? If they had made such mistakes in things temporal, probably they did likewise in spiritual things. And so he became an aroused and earnest inquirer. He searched the Scriptures in Siamese daily and soon he was persuaded to do so by prayer. He had stopped his worship of idols, but he had nothing in its place.

In November, Dr. McGilvary made a tour to Lampūn, a large city eighteen miles to the south-east, and he carried Nan Inta with him. While there, the light from above shone into his soul, and he was given a revelation of truth. But the obstacles in the way of making an open confession seemed to him unsurmountable. He would be cut off from his own people and kindred, and would be branded as an outcast. An outcast amidst friends and loved ones! Ah! but it is a test for manhood, for Christianity, to see a man cut loose from every tie that binds him to the past and present, from family and organized society, and to step out upon an unknown future for conscience sake. It is a test. And so for this first believer in Christ among the Laos, the trial was a bitter, heart-searching one. Satan tempted him. Could he not be a secret believer? Thereby he could maintain his influence

over his family, and before they were aware lead them to a knowledge of God. And so the struggle, the birth-throes of Light into the midst of a people in darkness, continued until the Holy Spirit revealed to him like a flash of light that duty was his, consequences God's. And so he yielded wholly, and was filled with an assurance of God's love and peace which never forsook him through all the stormy, trying years which were to follow. So on that memorable Sabbath, the 3d day of January, 1869, he stood up and made a public profession of his faith in the triune God, and then in solemn joy sat down with the band of missionaries to the table of the Lord. This same week the church in America was holding a special season of prayer, and in answer to pleas from Dr. McGilvary and Dr. Wilson, were especially remembering this new mission. Of this Dr. McGilvary afterwards wrote: "The rain falls in showers around us, and we know that evaporation has been going on. A new interest is awakened in heathen lands and we know the church is praying."

It is interesting to note here that this same eclipse that caused Nan Inta first to arouse to thought was the cause of a great change in Siam though in a very different way. His Majesty Fa Mongkut, who was a great lover of astronomy and the sciences, graciously "invited the French astronomical expedition to be his guests on the occasion of the eclipse as in his domain lay the path of complete obscuration. The governor of Singapore also, and the foreigners in Bangkok generally, including the

missionaries, were to be his guests. He went himself with his entire court with quite a fleet of steamers down the west coast of the gulf some two hundred miles, to Hua Wan, the point selected where the jungle had been cleared and a bamboo palace with other buildings had been put up, expending upon his right royal hospitalities in the whole affair about \$96,000. A malarial fever taken there brought on not long after his return to his capital the death of this martyr to science, the most enlightened of all the sovereigns of Asia. He died with Buddha's last words as the last upon his lips: 'All that exists is unreliable.' He used to say to the missionaries: 'The sciences I receive, astronomy, geology, chemistry, these I receive; the Christian religion I do not receive; many of your countrymen do not receive it.' . . . In the death of the king, the missionaries lost, some of them, a kind, personal friend, and 'well-wisher,' as he used to sign himself, and all a friendly disposed liberal-minded sovereign who put no obstacle in the way, of their evangelizing his people.* His successor, Prince Chulalongkorn, was a youth of fifteen years when he ascended the golden stairs to the throne. During his minority the affairs of state were administered by his grace the regent, a wise man of great executive ability."

Very different from the experience of Nan Inta was that of another of the first seven converts, Noi Su Ya, a doctor by profession. From the first

* From *Siam and Laos*.

hearing of the gospel he never worshiped an idol, and in less than two months was baptized. Nan Chai was the name of another one of the converts. These two disciples were destined to a speedy martyr's death. Both lived in a village some distance removed from Chieng Mai. Another was Bun Ma, a servant to the official, a nephew of the king, who instigated the trouble at the Chieng Mai court, which caused the martyrdom. A blind man was another one of this group of seven, and still another was a man old and feeble in body, who, during the persecution, yielded to the entreaty and pressure of his family and clan, and outwardly took part in the temple service. The seventh convert lived to the far north at Chieng Rai and was a man of sterling worth.

There had been much sickness among the missionaries during this memorable year and death had entered the home of Dr. Wilson and claimed one of his little ones. The circumstances of the death of this child and of its burial and reburial are too sacred and personal to be spoken of, but it is right that the church should know that there are depths of anguish and sorrow and suspense experienced by those who represent her in heathen lands that are incomprehensible, save by those who have likewise drank of the cup. But for this personal affliction the year had been one of almost uninterrupted and unexampled prosperity, and the little church of seven natives with the band of missionaries looked out upon a future bright with hope.

When the king realized that the newcomers into

his kingdom were simply teachers of a new religion, and that instead of material gain resulting from their coming, that they were drawing away men from Buddhism which was his support, he was disappointed. At court a designing official stirred up this feeling into wrath. So while outwardly professing friendship for the missionaries he began to scheme to rid the country of them. On the last of March, after Nan Inta's baptism in January, the following letter was received at the United States Consulate at Bangkok:—

“Chau Paya Puperat Tai, Minister of the Interior, begs to inform the acting Consul of the United States of America that the King of Chieng Mai, Pra Chau Kawilorot, has sent down letters to Prince Hluang Luang and the Prime Minister and myself, the purport of all being the same, namely, that whereas in former times the principalities of Chieng Mai and Lampūn and Lakawn had never been subject to visitation of famine, now for two years, the Year of the Tiger (1866-67) and the Year of the Rabbit (1867-68), there has been a scarcity of rice. It is evident that what has befallen the country is because in these lands where no foreigner ever before had come to live permanently, now at this time the missionary, McGilvary, who has come as a teacher of religion, had taken up his residence in Chieng Mai. Hence, these calamities have come upon them. He, the King of Chieng Mai, begs that the consul be made to issue an order withdrawing the missionary, McGilvary, and requiring his return. What is proper to be done in

this matter? You are requested to take the subject into consideration."

To this the acting United States Consul, Mr. McDonald, replied that "He had received the communication of His Excellency the Minister of the Interior, forwarding the complaint of the King of Chieng Mai alleging Mr. McGilvary to be the cause of the famine in his domains and requesting his removal. In reply he begs to say that it strikes him as rather singular to attribute the famine during the Year of the Tiger to Mr. McGilvary's taking up his residence in Chieng Mai, inasmuch as the scant harvest of that year had already been reaped before Mr. McGilvary has even left Bangkok to go up to Chieng Mai. And this year, 1868-69, though Mr. McGilvary is still at Chieng Mai we have tidings of an abundant harvest there. Moreover, in 1865-66 Korat and other towns in that quarter experienced a severe famine, and yet no foreigner had ever resided in that region of country. As to his—the consul's—being required to withdraw Mr. McGilvary, and constrain him to return it, would be manifestly wrong. His Excellency the Minister of the Interior, and the Siamese Government, gave consent to Mr. McGilvary's going up to Chieng Mai, and he went on the invitation of the King of Chieng Mai himself also. Moreover, he has expended on the removal of his family and goods no small amount of money. That he (the consul) should be asked to recall Mr. McGilvary and to constrain him to return without any transgression of the laws alleged against him, in

fact without any reason whatever, would not be right. The consul trusts his excellency will duly consider this matter and that his views may accord with what is right and just in the case."

At once the Minister to the Interior replied to Mr. McDonald, and said: "That his views fully coincided with those of the consul. But that, nevertheless, he had some solicitude about the matter because the King of Chieng Mai was an exceedingly arbitrary man, unscrupulous and difficult to deal with. That he felt constrained to say so much that the consul might be apprised of the true state of things."

Thus the King of Chieng Mai found himself foiled in his attempt to rid the country of the missionaries. Necessarily it took many months for him to discover this though his important letters were sent to Bangkok by speedy couriers. His wrath lashed him to bloody schemes, which he was in part able to carry out. All the while he acted the part of a friend of the missionaries so well that they never suspected his designs. He planned in his heart to kill first the converts, hoping that the missionaries would become alarmed and leave.

On September 11, Nan Chai and Noi Su Ya were arrested under false charges for having failed to perform their *corvée* labor. The fact that the accusation was false proved the blameless lives of the men. They were dragged to the house of the chief of the village and when once there these two men saw at a glance the mockery of the show of justice, which could not be kept up much longer under the

hatred of the hearts of their oppressors. They were accused of being Christians, which they admitted. They were told to denounce Jesus and kneel to Buddha. This they refused to do. Again they were commanded to recant, and again they refused. Of what then followed Dr. Wilson wrote thus:—

“While Nan Chai was giving a reason for the hope that was in him, one of the examiners kicked him in the eye, leaving it all bloodshot, and causing it to swell until it closed. The arms of the prisoners were then tied behind their backs, their necks were compressed between two pieces of timber tied before and behind so tightly as to painfully impede both respiration and circulation of the blood. They were then placed in a sitting posture near a wall and cords attached to the ears (in the pierced lobes), were tied to the wall behind. In this constrained and painful position, not able to turn their heads nor to bow them in slumber they remained from Monday afternoon until Tuesday morning about 10 o'clock when they were led out into the jungle to be executed. They kneel down and Nan Chai is requested to pray. He does so, crying out that his enemies might be forgiven, his last petition being, ‘Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.’ The tenderness of the scene melts some of his enemies to tears. The heads of the prisoners, prisoners for Jesus’ sake, are drawn back by slightly raising the cruel yoke. The executioner approaches with his club. Nan Chai receives the stroke on the front of his neck, and his body sinks

to the ground a lifeless corpse. Noi Su Ya receives upon the front of his neck five or six strokes, but as life is not yet extinct, a spear is plunged into his heart. His body is bathed in blood, and his spirit joins that of his martyred brother." The families of these two sainted men were not allowed to express any condolence or sorrow, or love for the prisoners. The wife of one sat beside her husband until, overcome by her grief, she was driven away and threatened into silence. Several times during the mock trial did Nan Chai and Noi Su Ya plead for the servants of the missionaries, that they might not be killed, and that bloody hands might not be laid upon the "teachers." These entreaties for the lives of the servants were heart-touching, and probably had much to do with their being spared. The loved ones of these two men hung upon the outskirts of the crowd, very like to the group of women about Calvary, helpless to interfere, yet agonized in spirit. The bodies of the martyrs were cast into a shallow grave.

"The Son of God goes forth to war,
A kingly crown to gain;
His blood-red banner streams afar,
Who follows in his train?

"The martyr first, whose eagle eye
Could pierce beyond the grave,
Who saw his Master in the sky,
And called on him to save;

"Like him with pardon on his tongue,
In midst of mortal pain,
He prayed for them that did the wrong;
Who follows in his train?"

No one told this tragedy to the missionaries, but as soon as tidings of it reached Chieng Mai, the servants left the mission compounds, without warning or explanation. It was two weeks before any one told either Dr. McGilvary or Dr. Wilson what had happened. These two weeks were filled with suspense. The usual crowd of visitors to the mission compounds were suspended. Everywhere the "teachers" went they were shunned, and a conversation could be held with no one. The air was filled with forebodings of evil. Rumors of horrible deeds committed and of more terrible ones to follow drifted to the ears. The very air they breathed was ominous. There was but one thing to do, Be still and wait. They tried as far as possible to go the regular rounds of daily life. A few came to the compounds ostensibly for medicines, but they were known to be spies, and to these the gospel was preached. A most trying feature of the situation was that they felt in duty bound to keep their fears from their children. It was September 26 before they heard what had happened. The truth, bad enough, was magnified. Dr. Wilson walked out at once to Noi Su Ya's village and found that he and Nan Chai had actually been martyred. He returned heavy at heart. No tidings could be had of the other five converts, as they were all in hiding. Letters were written describing the situation and were dispatched to the brethren in Bangkok. Great alarm prevailed upon receiving the news. Though the missionaries there feared that both of the pioneer families might then be dead, they hastened

to do all they could to assist them if indeed they might still be alive. The matter was laid before his grace the regent, and he promised to dispatch a special commissioner to the Laos at once. The commissioner was to carry stringent orders that the King of Chieng Mai should acknowledge the treaty rights existing between the United States and Siam and protect the foreigners. The regent said, however, that he could do nothing in behalf of the native Christians, as the King of Laos was supreme in internal affairs in his kingdom.

It was decided that the Rev. N. A. McDonald and the Rev. S. C. George of the mission should accompany the commissioner, and so the little company started up river with all the haste that it was possible to make. To save time they left their boats at Raheng and went overland upon elephants to Chieng Mai. They found the two families alive and bearing up under the strain with unusual courage.

An interview with the king followed. At first the letter of the regent was attended to and the king mildly acquiesced in regard to the missionaries. But when the murder of the native Christians was referred to, he became consumed with uncontrollable anger, and admitted that they had been killed by his order, and further said that he would continue to kill all his subjects who became Christians, as he regarded the leaving of the religion of Buddhism as rebellion against himself. He then went on to say most emphatically and defiantly that if the missionaries remained he could

not help it, but if they taught religion that he would expel them from the country. And so the stormy and unsatisfactory interview closed. The commissioner urged the missionaries to accompany him back to Bangkok, but they desired to remain so long as there was a ray of hope discernible by faith.

When the commissioner reported at Bangkok, the Government desired to recall the missionaries and would have done so but for the importunate, forceful pleading of Dr. Bradley, the father of Mrs. McGilvary, that they might remain. Dr. Wilson thought it probably best to retire to Raheng, within the confines of Siam proper, and still at the borders of Laos, but the two years in the little *sala* had given Dr. McGilvary such visions of the Laos coming to Christ that he steadfastly purposed to hold the field. He felt that much could be gained if they simply *held* the field. And so the days slipped by, and at night they lay down not knowing what might befall them before day should break. The country was in an unsettled condition. The Red Karens had been giving trouble, and hill tribes had been making raids and night attacks upon villages and towns. It was feared by the missionaries that the rage of the king might break forth and that he might order a night massacre covering his deed and protecting himself under the cry, "The Red Karens! The Hill Tribes!" A record of these dark days was made and hid in the air box of the melodeon, hoping that in case of death, it would be found by friends in their search for them. Subsequently it was lost,

and so the church is without the thrilling experiences of those days as it was written at the time when all the incidents were fresh in the mind, a living reality.

So bitter and hostile did the king continue that it became necessary for Dr. McGilvary to promise that they would withdraw. But he urged that the season was far advanced and the water low, making travel slow and difficult, and he begged to be allowed to wait for the next high water, six months hence, at the latest eight months, before he should embark. To this the king reluctantly acquiesced. Dr. McGilvary then wrote letters to the brethren at Bangkok, to the Board, and the home church, stating the situation, and urging that they would join him in pleading for God's interposition in behalf of the mission that the field might be held. That if God did not work a deliverance for the mission that it would have to be abandoned at the latest in eight months.

Now, it so happened that this King of Chieng Mai found that he must go to Bangkok to attend the ceremonies of the cremation of his late suzerain king, Fa Mongkut, and so he had to leave his kingdom just after extracting the promise from Dr. McGilvary, early in the year 1870. While in Bangkok he was importuned by the Siam mission to grant leave for the Laos missionaries to remain or else extend the time limit, but he defiantly refused both. During this visit at the capital he was seized with a dread disease which baffled the skill of his doctors. He realized his alarming condition,

and so ordered a speedy return to his kingdom, for it is the most woeful of catastrophes for a Laos prince to die outside of his city walls. The royal flotilla of boats started up the then thread of a stream with the weak and suffering king stretched on the floor of his cabin, praying that he might live to reach his city walls.

In the meantime, the missionaries marked the passing months, and no sign of deliverance, but their faith shook not. Dr. Wilson would not retire to Raheng and leave his friend alone, so they abode together. And the seasons passed and the rains descended, and the last day of grace drew nigh for the little band of waiting, trusting missionaries. They then began all but to count the hours. But there was also another band, a dark-faced company, with anxious faces, too. They were those who formed the attendants of His Majesty the King of Chiang Mai. They were bearing him forward on a litter toward his city as rapidly as their feet could go. He could no longer stand the toilsome journey in his boat and in his anguish of pain he cried out that he might be borne upon a litter. And so they lifted him to an improvised litter and bore him away. But his suffering increased and he was filled with despair lest he should die before he reached his city walls. And, behold! when in the distance the walls were sighted, he expired.

And so deliverance in an unexpected way had come to the mission, but deliverance just as surely as was that of Peter when imprisoned by Herod's wicked hand. And though the faith of the mis-

sionaries had been sorely tested, it had rung true, and God did not fail them, but gave deliverance and enlargement to the work of their hands.

The successor to the Herod-king was a man of keen intellect and kindly disposition. His wife was a warm friend to the ladies of the mission, and so the new government came into power and expressed at once a friendly feeling toward the mission.

One other incident of these early days must be given, not for its bearing upon the mission history, but because it reveals a phase of mission life and shows the necessity of a missionary's being an all-round-about man. When it had become necessary to organize a church in the mission, Dr. Samuel R. House, of the Bangkok mission, offered to go up to his brethren there. He left his boat at Raheng and proceeded by elephant over the mountains. He had noticed that his beast was bad tempered, and upon reaching Lampūn the creature gave vent to his distemper, shook his driver and Dr. House from his back, and enraged, gored the latter severely, wounding him in the abdomen. The natives managed to get the elephant away, and then, because of their superstitious fears, fled, leaving Dr. House alone, wounded, and in the fierce sun blaze. Fortunately, one of the spectators ran to Chieng Mai and informed Dr. McGilvary of the accident. In the meantime Dr. House, realizing his critical condition, tried to drag himself to the shade, but could not, as he was too weak. He could just reach his satchel, which he opened, and

by means of his hand mirror sewed up the wound—a dangerous condition under the most favorable circumstances—and there he lay in the heat and the dust, with parched lips and weakened from loss of blood and pain. In due time, Dr. McGilvary arrived, and he was borne to Chieng Mai, where he was tenderly cared for and nursed back to life.

In the early apostolic days of the church, the enemies of the cross endeavored to crush out the new religion that was gaining such a foothold within even the sacred walls of Jerusalem itself. And so with wicked hand they stoned Stephen and scattered the church. For a time it looked as though they had given what might prove to be a death blow, but we know how it is written,

“Therefore they that were scattered abroad
Went everywhere preaching the word,”

and the church grew and was multiplied. And so it was among the Laos. For awhile it looked as though the seed of the church had been killed, for there was no visible life. But as it has ever been of old, the blood of the martyrs watered that seed, and adown deep in the ground the life was stirring. It was a year and a half before another convert, Nan Ta, was baptized, and he proved to be the first-fruits of a great harvest. For some time before his baptism the missionaries had known him to be a believer, but they did not urge him to make a public profession. He came of his own accord and applied for the ordinance and for the opportunity to confess his faith publicly. His examination was

heart-searching but he manifested a calm, determined spirit, yet humble withal.

And now from every side came inquirers, not in Chiang Mai alone, but from all over the kingdom, and this for many reasons. From the first Dr. McGilvary had made tours into the villages and towns of the province and in the provinces beyond. The scattered converts had preached the word wherever they had fled from the sword of persecution. The news of the martyrdom had spread throughout the country and every one was asking, "Why were they killed? What gave them such a spirit of fortitude and peace? What kind of a religion is this that makes new men of old ones?" and thus were the people aroused and there were added to the church of such as should be saved.

Among those who were added at this time was one Sen Ya Wichai, who had heard Mrs. McGilvary teaching in the *sala* over two years before. He had not been able to escape from the thoughts aroused by her words, and he returned to receive further instruction. Soon he was led to a full knowledge of the truth. And so we could go on telling of these early conversions so full of interest, but we will have to be content with knowing that there was a mighty stirring of life among the hearts of the people, and that the church grew and the believers were greatly multiplied.

CHAPTER XX

THE SECOND PERSECUTION AND EXPANSION

AMONG the many pressing needs of the mission during its early days was that of a medical missionary, and in 1871, Dr. C. W. Vrooman was sent to the field. His arrival was most opportune, for faithful Nan Inta was all but dead with chronic dysentery. And thus his life was saved for many more years of fruitful labor. In the midst of endeavoring to meet the daily demands and multifarious duties of the mission, Dr. McGilvary and Dr. Vrooman planned to make a tour of the Laos provinces as soon as they could get away from Chiang Mai. They wished to ascertain "the size and comparative importance of the Laos chief cities and villages—which were comparatively unknown to them—in reference to missionary work, to preach the gospel, and to observe the disposition of the authorities and people toward foreigners, especially toward teachers of the Christian religion." But so pressing were claims upon them from day to day that the rainy season of 1872 had begun before they started on their long, perilous journey. The king had kindly furnished them with passports without which it would have been impossible to have made the trip. This journey is remarkable for several reasons, but principally because it embraced the entire mission in its length and breadth, as it stands

to-day. Furthermore these brave men pushed on to the great province of Luang Prabang, which is now under French rule, and where the Laos church is carrying on its first foreign missionary work.

Shortly after the return from this tour, Dr. McGilvary, with his family, leaving the work in the hands of Dr. Wilson and Dr. Vrooman, assisted by Nan Inta, sailed for America. Dr. McGilvary had been on the field—Siam and Laos—for fifteen years, and he and his wife and children stood sadly in need of rest and change. They left Bangkok April 19, and the following August Dr. Vrooman resigned and followed them. In his short term of service of a year and a half he had accomplished a great work for Laos and the mission lost in him a valuable man.

In the fall of 1874, Dr. McGilvary and family returned to their field, and early in 1875 were joined by Marion A. Cheek, M. D., a young man from Dr. McGilvary's native State of North Carolina. He remained in Bangkok long enough before starting up river to meet and fall in love with Miss Sarah A. Bradley, sister of Mrs. McGilvary. Within a few months he returned to Bangkok and was married to her.

In June, 1876, Dr. and Mrs. Wilson and children, with health quite broken down, returned to America on furlough. The mission was then upon a good footing to the visible eye. A compound had been granted by the king for a physician's house and hospital. The latter was simply a bit of bamboo structure, but it served well as a be-

ginning for the great Chieng Mai hospital as it exists to-day. This site was very near to the old *sala*, where the McGilvary family lived the first two years. There was also a good-sized compound across the river and below the bridge, where Dr. McGilvary and Dr. Wilson lived, and where the former still resides. A small lithograph press was in use. It was a great aid to the mission, though wholly inadequate to the needs.

Among the conversions which marked the year 1876 was that of the wife of Nan Inta. She had remained a stanch Buddhist all those years, and had been more than a "thorn in the flesh" to her husband. He now seemed lifted to realms of intoxicant joy, which was soon to be heightened by seeing two daughters, a son, and a son-in-law, brought into the fold. That same year of grace touched the heart of the wife of one of the martyrs and a general awakening of the country seemed imminent. This was the fear of the official class and the Sacred Order. They said, "The whole country will be running after this new religion if we do not interfere," and so began a series of petty persecutions, persecutions carried on in families, in clans, in villages. At every turn the missionaries were faced with it, but it was being carried on in so subtle a way that it was difficult to handle. These persecutions were not countenanced by the king, but the person next in rank to him, termed the Second King, or *Chau Haw Na*, was a bitter enemy to the mission, and did all he could to fan the flame. He secretly wrote letters to the vari-

ous governors and officials, bidding them to force the Christians to pay to the full extent all *corvée* laws of the nation, province, and locality. This was letting open the flood gates for all manner of oppressions. He also wrote letters saying that all who should in the future join the church would be severely punished. Thus a mild form of Nero rule prevailed. It finally culminated in May, 1878, when Dr. McGilvary undertook to perform his first marriage ceremony among the natives.

Kam Tip, a daughter of Nan Inta, was to be married to a deserving young man, and Mrs. McGilvary, wishing to make the sacredness of the occasion impressive upon the large circle of friends of the bride and groom, made ready to have the simple ceremony in her home. And so preparations moved forward, and among the natives there was quite a buzz of interest as to what a Christian wedding might be.

When the day arrived and all was in readiness, there suddenly arose a mountain of difficulty in the way. It was known that there was opposition to the wedding, but it was not suspected that it was of so serious a nature. The head man of Nan Inta's clan, a kind of patriarch, refused to give his consent. He, according to custom, had a right to the fees connected with the spirit-worship which accompanies Laos marriages. He notified Nan Inta that if he paid the fees, he might then have the Christian ceremony performed, but that if he did not pay the fees and insisted upon having the marriage, that he would hold Nan Inta responsible for

any loss or mishap or sorrow that should occur in the clan hereafter, and would lay it all to his having offended the spirits. Both Nan Inta and Dr. McGilvary were wise enough to see at a glance what untold misfortunes might befall the mission if the marriage ceremony were performed. They had right on their side, but immemorial custom and prejudice were allied against them, and they postponed the wedding. Dr. McGilvary felt that at last the time had come to make an application to the throne in Bangkok for an edict of free toleration of religion for the Laos. And so he wrote of the situation and ended the letter with an earnest plea for an edict of religious toleration, and sent it to the capital. The Siamese Government was at that time beginning to wean the provinces of their State powers, and so the mission had high hopes for the edict. On September 29, 1878, King Chulalongkorn issued a proclamation of religious toleration in the provinces of Chieng Mai, Lampūn, and Lakawn. Thus did God again turn the wrath of man to praise him.

That fall, 1878, Dr. Wilson returned to his field alone, as Mrs. Wilson's health did not permit her to accompany him. With him were two gifted young women, Miss Edna S. Cole and Miss Mary Campbell, who came to reinforce the mission. The latter after two years of service was drowned while bathing in the river. The former did excellent work in Chieng Mai until 1883 when she was forced to return to America on furlough by ill health. Upon her recovery she was transferred by

the Board to Bangkok where she has since labored and is especially noted for her most successful work as principal of the school for girls at Wang Lang.

After the Proclamation of Religious Toleration, the work of the mission moved forward with new life. Miss Cole took charge of the school for girls begun by Mrs. McGilvary and Mrs. Cheek, and she soon had thirty-five young girls in her care. On July 4, seventeen members of the Chieng Mai church and fourteen baptized children asked for letters of dismissal that they might be organized into a church some little distance removed from the city at a point central for the members. Nan Inta and his family were among the number. The new church was named *Betlehem*, "Bethlehem," by Dr. Wilson for his childhood church in Western Pennsylvania. This colonizing determination of the mother church at Chieng Mai is one of the secrets of its marvelous growth.

The same year Dr. McGilvary spent October in Lakawn organizing a church there. At that time he baptized six adults. The incidents connected with the conversion of the first member of this church are interesting. In 1877 a man of high rank came to Chieng Mai and asked for medicine to cure his deafness, and based his claim for cure upon the miracles that Christ had wrought. Upon investigation Dr. McGilvary discovered that he was the highest officer of the court in Lakawn and at that time was over seventy years of age. Twenty years before he had visited Bangkok, and Dr. Bradley had given him the Bible and other books

printed in Siamese. These he had studied diligently, that he might acquire the Siamese language. He had been much impressed with gospel truths, though he did not have a clear understanding of them nor did he accept them in his heart. He now gave himself to diligent study, under the missionaries, comparing their teaching with the teaching of Buddha, which he had taken the care to procure from a neighboring *wat*. In time he accepted the new faith and made a public profession thereof. At once he was ordered by the official circle in Lakawn to return. He anticipated death, but said to his Christian friends, "If they want to kill me because I am a follower of Christ I will let them pierce me." His fears were not realized in full, as his life was spared; but office, wealth, and social position were all stripped from him and he was ostracized by his friends. This man was the nucleus for the church in Lakawn.

The Chieng Mai and Bethlehem churches were blessed with the life and labors of Nan Inta until 1882, when he died. Dr. Wilson was with him at the time and he speaks thus of his peaceful end: "When told that he could not live through the day he turned to his eldest child and committed the mother to his care. He gave his hand to each of us first, then to his faithful wife and children and grandchildren, and last to the church members, saying to them, 'Be patient! Be patient! Trust in Jesus, all of you.' To his youngest son he said, 'I am walking on the way you all must go; only be ready for our Lord. Oh, my son, do not fall

from the right path! Trust in the Lord now, and do his work as I have tried to do. You will suffer many trials, but they will be forgotten when the day of reward comes. You plant the rice fields in the water and the rain, but three months from now you will gather the harvest. Learn from your yearly work the lesson of life and strengthen yourself in Jesus.' He suffered greatly, but toward the last he lay quietly as if sleeping, then suddenly opened his eyes and looked at me as if he would speak, but he was not looking at me, for his eyes were full of light and joy. A smile passed over his face, and at the same instant he breathed his last."

That same year the medical work had so developed that upwards of thirteen thousand patients were prescribed for by Dr. Cheek. The following year Dr. McGilvary and family were again forced to America on furlough. When they returned they carried with them as recruits the Rev. and Mrs. J. Hearst and the Rev. S. G. Peoples, M. D., also the Misses Griffin, Wirt, Wishard, and Warner. Mr. Hearst succumbed almost at once to malarial fever, and was so prostrate that he had to leave the field permanently. The mission soon lost, in 1883, Miss Wishard, as she was married to a missionary in Canton, and toward the close of the year Miss Wirt was married to Dr. Peoples. Miss Warner was with the mission only two years, but Miss Griffin has remained in Chieng Mai all these years, faithful and true to her charge in the girls' school.

In 1884 Miss Westervelt and the Rev. and Mrs.

Chalmers Martin arrived in Chieng Mai. Mr. Martin was granted only three years of service upon the field, as he succumbed to climatic influences and was forced to leave. In those few years he accomplished a great work for the mission, and was so enshrined in the hearts of the natives that they have never forgotten him.

In the fall of 1883, Dr. McGilvary spent a month in Lakawn getting a persecuted elder out of prison. While there he applied to the throne in Bangkok to establish a station there. The king warmly responded and a most desirable lot facing the water front was obtained, with an additional gift of two thousand rupees from his majesty for a hospital. At the next meeting of the mission they formally resolved to establish a station there, and Dr. and Mrs. Peoples volunteered for it. About this time, the mother church sent off another colony—the third—which was organized into a church called the Me Dawk Deng Church. It soon numbered thirty-six full communicants. The outlook for the whole field had become one of multiplied and multiplying labors.

In 1886 Dr. Cheek resigned from the mission and became engaged in secular business in the country. Dr. A. M. Cary was sent out that year to take his place. With him also came the Rev. and Mrs. D. G. Collins and the Rev. W. C. Dodd. On the trying trip up river from Bangkok Mrs. Cary, who was a sister of Mrs. Collins, yielded to an attack of fever and died just below Raheng. It was an hour of midnight darkness for the little party

when they laid the young wife and missionary in her grave beneath the trees in the deep and silent woods.

The year 1889 is known as the Year of Grace in the mission. One of the events which thus characterized the year was the organization of a church at Chieng Sen with twenty-three adult members and twenty-eight baptized children, a city about one hundred and fifty miles to the northeast of Chieng Mai. Before the year closed twelve new members were added to the church, half of them adults, making the adult membership twenty-nine. As this bright and growing church illustrates the efforts of one godly man, and also reveals a type of Laos Christian manhood, we will sketch it in brief. About the time of the second persecution the government decided to reestablish the old city of Chieng Sen, which had been destroyed by war and had lain waste for seventy years. So they ordered certain families, descendants from the original inhabitants, to go to Chieng Sen and settle there. A Christian by the name of Nan Su Wan was among those ordered to go, and he and his family, sad at heart, started off upon their long journey. His piety was strong enough to stand the transplanting, a change of scene and conditions more marked than those which have wrecked the lives of many in America. All through the years of isolation from the Christian assembly and the teaching and preaching of the word, he remained a living power for Christ. Every few years Dr. McGilvary would visit him and always there would

be a band of catechumens that Nan Su Wan had gathered into a class, for him to baptize and receive into the full communion of the church. At the same time a work of grace similar to this one was going on in a city forty miles south of Chieng Sen, the city of Chieng Rai. The work there had been begun by one of the first seven converts, and the Christian company numbered fifty souls. They were, however, too scattered to be organized into a church as was the little band at Chieng Sen.

This same year marked the establishing of a permanent out-station at Lampūn. This was done under the most encouraging circumstances. An elder was stationed there to look after the work. He was admirably fitted for the work, as he had been for many years the head monk in one of the *wats* there, and knew the place and people well. At the communion service held at that time six adults were received and six children baptized. Seven of this group belonged to one household, the head of which was the son of the late Nan Inta, the first convert.

By this time we see that the mission was firmly established and had begun to expand into the provinces contiguous to Chieng Mai. More laborers were needed, not only to occupy new stations, but to take charge of various forms of mission work which was necessary if the mission was to make the native church self-supporting. The majority of these new missionaries are now upon the field, and we shall see them at their work as we take a tour of the different stations of the mission.

CHAPTER XXI

CHIENG MAI, THE FAIR CITY OF PALMS

As capital of the Laos provinces, and as the place where the entering wedge of mission work was made, Chieng Mai first claims our attention. The name and glory of this capital City of Palms is inseparably linked with that of Doi Su Tep. This *Doi* or "mountain" is a noble peak. It rises in solemn and lonely grandeur from the midst of the immense fertile plain of the province and reaches a towering height. Its summit has never been reached to my knowledge with a barometer, but it has been estimated by many to approximate some six thousand feet above sea level. This is based upon the actual altitude of what is considered a halfway distance. Its crown is capped by a *wat* covering the alleged footprint of Buddha, which has been referred to; but this *wat* is only as a speck upon the grand pile beneath it, an infinitesimal effort of man compared with the surrounding handiwork of God.

From a distance this Doi Su Tep apparently rises from the very brink of the Me Ping, but a nearer view shows that its foot is some four or five miles back from the water's edge. And there, seemingly resting, beneath the protection of this noble mountain, stretches up and down both river banks, the fair City of Palms. But before we enter

its gates let us take one more look at Doi Su Tep. Down its sides rushes many a bold mountain stream, plunging here and there over large boulders, and not resting until the plain below is reached. The water from one of these streams is conveyed by an aqueduct into the city. Stretched along the gentle slopes of the mountain are to be found in great numbers fragrant tea gardens and beside them the hamlets of the gardeners. These gardens are midway between the base and summit, running in altitude from two thousand five hundred feet to four thousand feet above the sea level. Every four months, during the gathering seasons, people in large companies can be seen climbing the mountain sides to the tea gardens. Some of them have money, others barter goods, and still others are empty-handed. These last named gather the leaves on shares. It will be remembered that these leaves are not steeped and used as a beverage, but are steamed until soft and then put in the mouth as a "chew." These tea gardens form one of the most important industries of the whole country, and the villagers are a simple, interesting people, presenting a most attractive, inviting field for mission labor. As yet they have been untouched by mission work, excepting by Dr. McGilvary and Mr. Campbell and family, who have visited them a time or two. This is another living illustration that "the field is white to the harvest and the laborers are too few."

In olden times Chieng Mai was a double-walled city, built upon the west river bank, but like Bang-

kok it has outgrown its bounds, and the days of peace allow the people to settle without the protecting walls. It lies about one thousand feet above the sea level, but it is impossible to estimate the exact population of the place, for there has been no method of accurately obtaining a census. It is generally conceded that about twenty thousand souls are within the city walls, but including the overflow surrounding the walls and stretching up and down the opposite bank, the number reaches one hundred thousand. The city is the third largest in the kingdom of Siam. Its streets are wide and so well kept that the city is easily known as the trimmest, best kept in the kingdom. The drives are picturesque, especially the one that, leading out through the White Elephant Gate, swings around the old city wall. This wall is still in good condition but is artistically vine-covered and draped. It rises bold and imposing, twenty-two feet high, from the side of the thirty-foot moat upon whose quiet waters bloom thousands of water lilies and of the sacred lotus. This road gives a glorious view of Doi Su Tep, as it apparently rises just beyond reach across the rice plains. The palace and various official buildings are worthy of a visit if one is looking for uniqueness and not for architectural splendor. The *wats* and *prachēdis* of the city are among the most beautiful in the whole country.

It would hardly be fair to speak of Chieng Mai and not record one of the standing jokes of the place which has to do with white elephants. The

joke, however, is with the foreigners, for to the natives all associations with white elephants are sacred. New arrivals are invariably asked if they saw the white elephants in Bangkok. Usually the reply is "No." "Then you would be interested to see the white elephants of this capital city?" Of course, the stranger desires to see them, though he is surprised to hear that there are white elephants in Chieng Mai, and mentally he marks that he has many things to learn about this new land and city. And so at the earliest opportunity the party starts off to view the beasts, all the while the stranger in a state of pleasant anticipation. Out through the White Elephant Gate they go and over a bare strip of country for a full quarter of a mile toward a group of trees under which are visible white arched buildings—the stables! Expectancy is at its height, for the road provokingly leads up to the rear of the stables, and will not reveal even a peep at the creatures. When at last a bend turns the group, and faces them to the stables, expectation sinks to chagrin, for behold! two large, white, plaster elephants staring out knowingly with their little eyes. These effigies were erected, along with some others, away back in 1799 as a protection to the city.

The mission compounds are all upon the river banks, the one farthest upstream being that of the boys' high school and the mission press, the former under charge of Mr. Harris, the latter of Mr. Collins. Because of Chieng Mai's strategic importance as the capital it is expedient that all the

mission institutions be located there, such as the press, and the normal, theological and training schools.

It is impossible to magnify the importance of this mission press. It has all grown from the little lithograph press brought out in 1871, but until Mr. Collins took charge of the work in 1886 it had necessarily been restricted in its field of usefulness for lack of a man to give time to the work. The mission was Providentially led in assigning Mr. Collins to this special work, for he has developed rare abilities and talents for the work. He took what raw material he found, made the best of it, and by patience he has trained a dozen young men to assist him, and what is more marvelous, has trained them to work on time. At the tap of the bell they enter the simple, modest building termed the press room, and there they work happily and with the best of spirits until the tap of bell at noon time, when they stop for dinner, to resume work upon the stroke of the bell. This is exceedingly significant, for it shows what can be done with the easy-going Asiatic—who hates routine more than he fears the dreaded fever—by persistent, careful training upon a Christian foundation.

The press now embraces two fonts of Siamese and two of Laos type and two of English, yet it is inadequate to the demands. During the past year a total of two and a half million pages has been issued. It must be remembered that the Laos have no printed literature, and this press is supplying this great need by pouring out into the homes and

villages the best of all literature. Besides the portions of the Bible that have been translated, and catechisms and tracts, the press prints school textbooks and other works written to meet the peculiar needs and problems of this people. A good book for America is not always a good book for the Laos; and so the missionaries have striven to see with the native eye, feel with the native heart, and to write or translate books accordingly. Contact with the missionaries has developed in this people a taste for reading. And so we find these indefatigable workers in Laos-land striving to give books to the people that will be helpful and uplifting, that will interest the growing church in Christian life and work at large, that will give Sunday reading for Christian Endeavorers and Sunday-school scholars, reference books for students, and wholesome reading for those who are still groping in darkness; that perchance some may be interested and led to Christ. The Laos Mission wishes to keep out of the land all harmful books, or if such books must come they wish to be at least fore-armed. At present this is an easy matter, for this mission press is the only press in the land. To hold this monopoly of all printed matter the press annually does a large amount of job work for the local government, both in Laos and Siamese characters. The monthly sheet, containing the Sunday-school and Christian Endeavor lessons, has its first page devoted to church news. It is the fond hope of the mission soon to have this paper developed into a good religious newspaper. At pres-

ent the force is too weak to undertake the work, vital and important as it is.

This press is what is known in mission parlance as self-supporting, though it originally had to be supported by funds from the Board. The work of translating has been carried on in the midst of pressing, distracting, multifarious duties by different members of the mission. The translators cannot shut themselves into their studies and labor but the work has to be done with the door opened and the pen ready to be laid aside at a moment's warning. In late years Dr. Wilson, of Lakawn station, has devoted his life to translating, and has given to the church a full collection of hymns. This volume of the hymns of ages of church history, if it could be separated from the rest of Dr. Wilson's life and labors for Laos, would alone stand as a lasting monument to his name.

On the same side of the river, but farther down the bank, is the medical compound. Here is located, besides the residence, the dispensary and hospital. This work began with Dr. McGilvary's hiring men to take quinine; and now the dispensary's receipts reach six thousand five hundred dollars gold annually. Since 1889 the work has been under the care of Dr. McKean. He stands on the mission field to-day as a type of the ideal medical missionary—Heal the sick—preach the gospel. With him the command is inseparably one. He has trained with patience and skill two efficient assistants, and a good nurse to assist him in his arduous labors. Thousands of patients an-

nually receive treatment at the hands of this physician and scores come to him with serious troubles needing surgical treatment.

Until the last year, also, all the medicines, other than the tooth, blood, and gall kind of the native doctors, used in this immense city were dispensed from this building. Now enterprising Chinamen have stocked their stalls with quinine and standard medicines, which meet with a ready sale. But so great is the demand that the dispensary is strained to its utmost to meet the heavy claims upon it. All day long we find Europeans, Siamese, Chinese, Burmese, the Hill Tribes, Ka Mus, and others, besides the Laos, coming to its gates and climbing up the sweeping flight of stairs leading to the dispensary room. There one sees as to neatness and attractiveness a modern American drug store, attended by two courteous, fine-looking young Christian men, who serve one with ease and skill and with a gentleness and kindness born of their Christian faith. To the poor, medicines are given, but those who are able pay for what they receive. There are texts of Scripture upon the wall to arrest the eye and claim the thoughts. In the packages of medicine a page of Scripture or a hymn is slipped and always there is some one to point the way to the Great Physician to those who will remain. Daily services are held in the hospital, and at night an evening school is taught for half an hour before the prayer service.

Besides Dr. McKean's regular medical work he has established a most interesting work among a

village of lepers. Just below this City of Palms is a settlement of these poor, loathsome unfortunates, where all the city lepers are banished as soon as their disease becomes manifest. Dr. McKean has done much to alleviate their physical sufferings, and many of their souls have been touched by the Master's hand. These have been received into the communion of the Chieng Mai Church, though they are debarred from attending worship at the church building. Services are held in their village, certain precautions being observed as to contact with the disease. Another work carried on by Dr. McKean is among the men, women, and children, who compose the chain gang, the criminal class. This class is used by the government to work the roads and do other public service. Dr. McKean visits them in prison and ministers to them body and soul.

It is impossible to estimate the power for good of the medical work, for there is no way of reckoning the conversions resulting therefrom. Certain it is that it is one of the most efficient agencies in planting the gospel in the Laos country, for it breaks down the universal belief in spirits. The Laos Mission is not conducted narrowly. It is as broad as Christianity, its policy being to present the gospel to every man, and to secure to all its privileges and blessings.

Combined with the mission's belief in the union of the evangelistic and philanthropic, is its steadfast purpose to establish a self-supporting, self-propagating native church. The hope of the

heathen world is through the native converts, even more than the missionaries. The latter can only establish; the former must carry to completion. To do this the mission must have schools; and so we find in every station schools, and in this capital city, high schools. From deference to native custom there is no coëducation. The boys' school is upon the press compound, and the girls' school is on the opposite bank and at the southern border of the city, under charge of Miss Griffin and Miss M. A. McGilvary. These schools both have normal courses, and it is the hope of the mission to draw graduates from the schools of other stations to these normal courses, and to send out to the cities and villages teachers who can take competent charge of mission schools under the supervision of the missionary. These normal courses have only been recently established.

A recent advanced step of the mission has been the establishing of parochial schools in connection with each station's work. Those of Chieng Mai are especially encouraging, as the church here is an older growth. "Organized on a self-supporting basis, buying their own supplies, collecting their own fees, paying their own teachers, and quite independent, except for oversight, they approach the ideal toward which the mission is laboring."

The theological school has graduated several native ministers. There are no buildings for this school. When there are candidates to be educated, a room is obtained somewhere, and the work is begun. The student must master the Siamese lan-

guage; for while only a few books of the Bible are translated into Laos, the complete Bible is printed in Siamese, and there are also several invaluable aids that have been translated into the Siamese and not into the Laos vernacular. This school is practical in its plan of work. The students are sent out on Saturday afternoons into the surrounding villages to spend the Sabbath holding services and teaching the people. On Monday they return and on Tuesday give an account of their tour. Thus they are guided and trained, and when they finally are graduated, they are humble, able, capable servants of God. When there is no theological school, a training school for Christian workers is held. This is a thoroughly unique school, and it is due to Mr. Campbell's ability and zeal that it has become such a factor in the station's work. The students are from widely scattered churches. With Mr. Campbell they go out into the villages and camp, remaining several weeks in a place, and drawing additional students for the time from the local church. As they study and recite, there gathers around the camp a number of villagers, who can sit and listen or ask questions, which the students answer if they are able. Evangelistic services are held, and during the day, time is found to visit in the houses of the place. This plan, as has been proved, works admirably well among the Laos. The "thinking" factor is a stupendous one in the mission, and it has been found that the students are aroused to thought by this method. The limited number of reference or text-books makes it

an easy task to carry everything needed for the work. When the rains commence, the school returns to the city, and Dr. McGilvary and Dr. McKean assist by giving several hours a week to the work.

Just a little below the medical compound is the bridge that spans the wide sweep of the Me Ping. This bridge was built by European skill, employed with Laos gold. It is a good, solid structure, and across it pours two steady streams in opposite directions. Ponies canter across beneath their smartly-dressed riders; jinrikishas roll along occasionally, and English victorias can be seen in the cool of the day, when the *chaus* go forth for fresh air; and always there are innumerable passers-by on foot. A little below this bridge are located the large southern compounds of the station. They comprise the church building, the girls' school, Dr. McGilvary's home and another residence which is now occupied by Mr. Campbell and family.

Dr. McGilvary has lived on this compound ever since moving from the *sala*, though not always in the present house. Their home is built after the Indian bungalow style, and is pleasantly surrounded by a rose garden and a luxuriant orchard and fruit grove. It is difficult to estimate the power of a Christian home in a heathen land. This one has ever stood for all that makes a Christian home the ideal home of the wide world. Its tidy look, its fragrant flowers and vines, its gardens and fruit trees, have all preached more eloquently than

words that the Christian religion is meant for life as well as death. Though Dr. McGilvary has always had his home in this city, he has spent only a part of his time there. Like Paul he has felt the Spirit calling to regions beyond, and like him also, his tours can be traced by little streams of light shed forth from Christian homes along the way.

Though over seventy years of age Dr. McGilvary is still erect and is in possession of almost his full strength of young manhood. He is lovingly termed by his young associates in the field as "the youngest old boy in the mission."

It will be remembered that in 1872 Dr. McGilvary, in company with Dr. Vrooman, pushed across the Me Kawng into the Laung Prabang province. In 1897 he again made a tour into the province, and began a work there among the Ka Mus which has already borne fruit. The Ka Mus are a mountain people, settled in the Muang Sai and surrounding districts of the province. They speak a language differing from the Laos, and are a simple pastoral people. It takes twenty-five days of steady travel to reach this people from Chieng Mai. Though they speak a language of their own, many of them understand Laos. They have never been converted to Buddhism, and are spirit-worshippers, pure and simple. They have no written language, but show a readiness and desire to learn the written characters of the Laos. Just where ethnologists would place this people I do not know. However, it is certainly known that they are renowned

for their honesty and simplicity of life, and so must be sprung of good stock.

So impressed was Dr. McGilvary with the receptivity of this people that in 1898 he spent several months there. Among this people, far away from his beloved family circle, on March 16, he passed the anniversary of his three score years and ten. On the journey he met with adventures and dangers such as always face him in cutting through Laos jungle wilds. In speaking of the roads, he remarks in a report of the tour: "Beneath, water and mud, brooks, rivers and ponds; above, forcing our way through the tall grass and undergrowth and after a night's rain nearly equal the swimming of a river, so that for nearly twenty-six traveling days, dry feet and limbs were almost unknown till night. Ten times I swam my pony across water courses. Once the current carried us down the stream so far that with difficulty we made the landing on the opposite bank—somewhat exciting, as I had never learned to swim."

When he finally stood among this Ka Mu people he found a man who had learned to read previously and with whom he had left books the year before, who welcomed him by saying: "I have read these books. They are true, indeed. I worship Jesus daily." He urged Dr. McGilvary to remain and teach his own people. This he did, the man acting as interpreter. He visited all the surrounding villages, including the one where resided the head man of the group of ten villages. This work culminated in the head man and his whole village

renouncing their spirit-worship and sitting down with Dr. McGilvary on the following Sabbath to learn how to keep the day holy. From morn till night they studied, beginning in the child's catechism with the question: "Who made you?"

And now Dr. McGilvary was faced with a perplexing question: What was to be done with these people? Could he return home and leave them as sheep without a shepherd? Many months would be needed to teach and indoctrinate them before they could become intelligent Christians. He determined to remain throughout the season, and so sent back carriers to Chieng Mai with the tidings of his change of plans and with orders for new supplies and more books. He then left the Ka Mu hill country, and turning his face toward the capital city of Laung Prabang he sought the French governor and the native viceroy to obtain their permission to remain and labor among the Ka Mus for the season. This they refused to do, ostensibly because of concern lest the season prove too severe for the health of Dr. McGilvary. His disappointment was unbounded at this turn of affairs. He retraced his steps back to the Ka Mu villages and spent ten more days teaching the people to sing a few hymns and starting the young people to learn to read.

He then dropped back to Muang Sai, where he expected his carriers to meet him on their return from Chieng Mai. For two weeks he waited there, the suspense caused by his carriers' failure to return, together with the apparent failure in the plan

he had made for work among the Ka Mus, all but making the days unendurable.

A stone's throw from the town rises a hill, at that time crowned with a cluster of trees, which affords a quiet retreat for one who wishes to be alone. After the first ten days of waiting had passed, Dr. McGilvary took his Bible, and sitting on the limb of a low tree, spent two mornings there from breakfast till noon, committing the Ka Mu people and the whole situation unto Him who had so clearly led him there and placed him in just that perplexing position. On the second day in that solitude the burden was lifted. So marked and unmistakable was the peace that came with the triumph of faith that he cut into the limb of the tree where he sat, "June 26, P. H. and P. A."—prayer heard and prayer answered.

In two days more the carriers arrived and with them came two Christians who had come to assist him during the season. His joy was unbounded. The French officials had said nothing against natives remaining, and so it was arranged for these two men to stay and instruct the Ka Mu villages then interested, returning to Chieng Mai in November.

November came and passed, and the two men had not returned. Faith was again tested. Were they ill? Had the rulers interfered? But on the 10th of December, in the early morning they walked into the compound with faces aglow with gladness. They had only good news to tell. Many of the Ka Mus were ready for baptism, and many more

were studying. They bore letters written by the men and women they had taught, begging the mission to send them teachers at once. "The tree as well as Jacob's stones had been a witness."

At the next meeting of presbytery the Laos church took charge of this work among the Ka Mus. One of their ministers volunteered to go to them as a missionary and the church gladly assumed all necessary expenses. Thus was established the first regularly organized foreign missionary work of the native Laos church.

Below Dr. McGilvary's home stands the church, which is the mother of the sixteen churches dotted over Laos-land to-day. Its membership is nearly nine hundred, scattered through the city and into surrounding villages. The oversight of this widely-scattered church is an immense work, and could easily take the whole time of one missionary. The church is well organized, having midweek prayer meetings, a Sabbath school, Senior and Junior Societies of Christian Endeavor, and a Woman's Foreign Missionary Society. All of these branches do excellent work, and under the guiding hand of the missionaries are slowly but surely developing so as soon to make the church not only self-supporting, as it already is, but self-sustaining. This is a difficult thing to do when the needs are so pressing, the work so arduous, the evangelistic work so inviting, so fruitful. But these missionaries study as one of their text-books of mission methods the gospels and The Acts of the Apostles, and they see there how the Master spent much time

with the twelve, teaching, guiding, laying foundations upon which they should afterwards build. And they read also how Paul and Peter gave time to the building up of the churches, the edifying of its members.

Before leaving this church, let us take one backward glance to the early days of the persecution. At that time Dr. Wilson wrote: "We had looked forward to the privilege of organizing a church at no distant day in that country village with Noi Su Ya as one of its standard bearers. But the club and the spear have ended his life and his spirit has joined the church of the First-born. We miss his smiling face and happy expression and child-like trust in God. But while waiting we know that some day a church will be planted in that village of the martyrs, and as it grows their names will be held in lasting remembrance." God has abundantly fulfilled this prophecy. At that village the little church of Mē Pu Ka numbers eighty-five souls, and in the Laos church at large there are upwards of three score full communicants descended from one of the martyrs.

Though there are several mission families in this station one never finds two of the men in the church building on Sabbath unless it be for some special occasion. Sunday sees them in the out villages all holding services at different places.

Chieng Mai is the keynote for the other four stations of the mission; yet it is not the mission, and we must press on to the other stations if we would see more of the modern miracles that God has

*The
Giles
Martyrs
the first
of the
mission*

wrought through his servants there. But before we go let us glance once more above the city to Doi Su Tep. There thirteen hundred feet above the plain are nestled beside a roaring brook several small cottages built of teak and thatch. These houses go by the name of the Chieng Mai Sanitarium. There during the intense heat at the close of the dry season the missionaries sometimes go for a few weeks of change and cooler air. They use the golden hours for language and Bible study, for no matter how long a man has been upon the field he feels that he still has need for language study. From that vantage point looking down upon the city one can readily see why we should call Chieng Mai the City of Palms. As the winds play with the palm leaves, the sound harmonizes with the soft melody of monastery bells. May the day speedily come when the monastery bell will be replaced by the full, tuneful tone of church tower chimes.

CHAPTER XXII

LAKAWN, PRE, NAN, AND CHIENG RAI

IT is four days' travel by elephant or pony or chair from Chieng Mai to Lakawn, though the distance is only about sixty-five miles. The first night will be spent at Lampūn, which is already familiar to our reader as a sub-station of Chieng Mai. The mission compound here is a little removed from the river, so one gets a more liberal supply of native smell and smoke, which latter at the evening hour is all but suffocating. It is a custom of all Laos people to sweep their yards at sunset and burn the trash piles; hence the immense amount of smoke referred to. However, that is but a small thing in a missionary's life, and so we would say that the mission compound in Lampūn is pleasantly located. To one side is a chapel and dispensary. This chapel is unique and splendidly adapted to the needs, as there is no front wall to partition the chapel and the veranda, so wayfarers often slip up the steps and sit upon the veranda listening throughout the entire service. To the back of the chapel is a dispensary, where presides a native who has been trained by the medical missionary in Chieng Mai. Over the wide field of this prosperous city of Lampūn with its strong self-supporting native church, is the governing hand of one missionary and his wife, the

Rev. and Mrs. J. H. Freeman. It is not the ruling policy of either the Board or mission to place a single family in a station. It is an everyday fallacy that exists among the laity of the church in America to think that a missionary, simply because he is a missionary, is far above the consecrated Christian worker at home. As a matter of fact he is not different from his brethren in America, just because he works among the heathen nations. True it is that as a rule missionaries are picked men and women of lofty aim and purpose, which enables them to minimize the physical and material and magnify the spiritual and eternal. Yet they are human and so need mental and moral influences to sustain them, just as do their kindred in Christ at home. There is no hardship endured by missionaries that can compare with the unutterable loss of all that in the past made up their Christian experience. No gathering of saints in the sanctuary; no meeting together in prayer; no wise, discreet counsel of some elderly man or woman of God; no uplifting influences that our Christian civilization wields upon its children; no heart-to-heart sympathy, such as comes in times of sorrow and perplexity; no looking up to scores or hundreds of fellow-Christians who are stronger than himself. As Drummond has wisely said: "The saddest thing about a missionary's life is that there is no one beside him better than himself." It is true that the missionary has the abiding presence of Christ, as he promised when he said: "Lo, I am with you alway," and it is true that he learns to

lean heavily upon God and drink more deeply of heavenly waters, yet after all he is in the flesh, and being so, he needs the elbow touch of brethren, and for reasons manifold.

One should not point to our great pioneer missionaries, such as Judson, Carey, and Dr. McGilvary, and claim that their efforts prove the contrary. These men are giants. They stand as did Saul of old, head and shoulders above other men. They have been called to a special work and have been given powers to accomplish that work. With the rank and file of missionaries it is different. They need mental and moral sustenance. To further this, a comfortable home is given the missionary that will keep out the heat and the cold, and where he can put up his book shelves and hang upon the walls his Sistine Madonna and Angelus. The infancy of missions has passed, and experience has proved that the missionary lives longer, has better health, with fewer furloughs, and is enabled to wield a stronger arm in the battle, when he is put in a home and given coworkers. In keeping with this policy strong central stations is the watchword. In these stations the various plants are located, theological and educative, and from them radiate over the entire province light and influence. They are headquarters for the missionary, and from thence he goes forth on his tours of weeks or months to wage the battle. The station of Chieng Mai, as we have already seen, is the strongest in the mission. Its power should cover the province. But so thickly settled and so im-

portant are the city and province of Lampūn that it is necessary to have a missionary there to supervise, and so we find it a sub-station. The mission family there is in a way sustained by the station at Chieng Mai, and so cannot be looked upon as isolated. But even with such a policy as the one described, it is necessary at times for a single family to remain alone in a station a year or more, or, as in the case of Mr. Shields in Pre in 1900, for one man to be by himself for a whole year. These are exceptions born of dire necessity.

After the night's rest the journey must be pushed forward before the morrow finds the sun peeping over the tree tops. The night will come when the foot of the mountains is reached which divides the two provinces. There in the little village of Me Ta, beside the murmuring stream of the same name, the night will be passed. The mountains rise about the village like a towering amphitheater. The palm trees seem to be craning their necks in a vain effort to peep over them. The evening calm will be broken by the call of jungle fowls, the scream of peacocks, or the wail of monkeys. Nearer, the clickety-click-tum of rice pounders at work, mingled with the beat of pestle as it falls in the curry mortar, will alternate with the occasional trumpet of an elephant and his constant "swish, swish" as he beats upon his leg the dust from grass he is cropping. And then suddenly, as in the twinkling of an eye, darkness settles down, and the liquid stars come out to stand guard through the night.

There is a large *sala* beside the river, and in it the night will be passed; and lucky indeed will be the traveler if no native near by decides to roast red pepper for the morning curry.

The next day will be passed in climbing up and over the mountain, and so the camp is astir while it is yet dark. But the darkness disappears as it came upon the eve before, and see—the sun breaks over the mountains!

“ . . . He strikes the great gloom

And flutters it o'er the mount's summit in airy gold fume.
All is over,”

and the day's climb is before and above. After a breakfast which has been cooked over the camp fire, the baskets are packed and the carriers go on ahead. That day will ever live fresh and green in the memory of one who has traveled those mountain wilds. Cool recesses, shady glens, bold mountain passes, gurgling brooks, and rich verdure above and below, all vie with each other and challenge the world to show a more beautiful scene. Luncheon will be eaten at a halfway distance where an overhanging peak affords a cool shade and a brook below offers an abundance of refreshing water. And there one can feast upon other food than that which is for the physical man. When surrounded with such visible tokens of God's power and handiwork one realizes that life “means intensely and means good” and strength is given to gird up the loins afresh and to go forward with the still small voice within, “Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit.”

The night will be spent in a *sala* upon the other side of the mountains and the travelers will be weary, indeed, for the greater part of the climbing has been done afoot. It was at this camping ground that the writer of these pages sat spell-bound listening to the most thrilling, inspiring words she had ever heard from man, as the venerable Dr. McGilvary told her the story of the Laos mission. At that time he had his face set toward the far-away province, Luang Prabang. And as we sat there in the afternoon calm he seemed to be filled with a spirit of inspiration as he touched upon the immensity of the work before him, and then went back in memory to the sixties and told in his graphic style of those early days; and as he spoke of the dangers, struggles, persecutions, trials, and finally of the light piercing the black darkness and the triumphs and the victories won, the man vanished before me and I saw only the onward march of the Cross of Jesus. Dr. McGilvary was wholly hid behind that cross. It was all, "What God hath wrought," and not once, "What I have done." As I listened my heart was quickened and my pulse thrilled, and I thought of the woman at the well of Samaria hearing those words of life from the lips of the Master, and within me came the resolve that I, too, would run and tell all the city. This book is one of the ways in which it has been done.

Lakawn will be reached on the morrow about noontime, and welcome indeed will be the cool shade of the mission compound after the ride

across the bare rice plains under the scorching sun. The two mission compounds of the city are locally known as the north and south compounds, respectively. The latter will be reached first and there the traveler will receive a right royal welcome into the ideal home of Mr. and Mrs. Taylor. Adjoining their home is the boys' school building, and immediately beyond is another mission house built by Dr. Peoples before he went to Nan to open the work there, and since then occupied, first by the Curtis and then by the Callender families. Connected with the boys' school is the Industrial Farm, which was instituted in 1890. This farm, for several reasons has never attained the end in view, but this is not the fault of the system, nor the missionary in charge; and some day in the near future a live, working industrial farm upon the south compound will prove this. There are problems and difficulties in mission work, which only the initiated can know. This farm project has been beset by them. But already much good has been done by the combination of the industrial with the educative. Many boys have been trained into capable carpenters, and many more have been by patience and perseverance taught to recognize the fact that manual labor is honorable. The Laos share the deep-rooted conviction of the East, that labor is to be tabooed by the educated. So it is eminently fitting that its mission schools should teach practically to the contrary.

To the back of the compound stretches the rice

plains of the farm, where rice for the school is raised. A mile up the river is the north compound, where are located the chapel, dispensary, hospital, the girls' school, and two resident compounds, one of which contains two dwellings. These several compounds are all embraced under the one head "north compound."

The medical work here is under the care of Dr. Hansen, and is conducted in a similar manner to that in Chiang Mai. The hospital building has been recently transformed into a new and more commodious building by a memorial fund given for the purpose, and the new building is known by the name of the Charles T. Van Santvoord Hospital. Would that we had more such fitting memorials in this land and other heathen lands!

The girls' school is a growth, as is all the educational work in the mission. A few girls were first gathered by Miss Fleeson in a group on the veranda and taught, until the number grew and the work proved so encouraging that the station adopted the support of the school. Previously all the expenses had been met by private contributions. Miss Fleeson, assisted by Miss Wilson, has gradually developed the industrial element of the school until it is now decidedly an important feature of the work. The girls are taught to spin and weave, to cut and sew; are required to keep their dormitories in perfect order, and are trained to know what responsibility means in the way of hated routine duties.

On one of these compounds lives the veteran,



ONE OF THE GIRLS.

Dr. Wilson, now alone, as recently his daughter, who had been at the head of the home since her mother's death, was compelled by ill health to come to America. Dr. Wilson came to Lakawn two years after it was opened by Dr. and Mrs. Peoples in 1885, and here has lived and labored since. To one side of his compound is the tiny house occupied by his niece, Miss Fleeason. Beyond this are the buildings of the girls' school, and then comes the residence of Dr. and Mrs. Hansen.

The church in Lakawn has just attained its majority, but it numbers two hundred and seventeen souls. The interesting circumstances connected with its first member, Praya Si Hanat, will be recalled, also the fortitude with which he stood his many persecutions. And so it has ever been with the Lakawn church; for it has suffered many things from many Herods and, too, in the face of the proclamation of religious liberty. Many of these persecutions have resulted in the furtherance of the work.

So bitterly have the members of this church themselves suffered in various petty persecutions that we find them giving of their poverty seventy rupees the past year to the persecuted Chinese Christians.

Recently radical changes have taken place in the government of the province, death having removed some bitter enemies of the work. At present the governor is one of the most liberal, influential chiefs of the whole Laos country, and the Siamese commissioner is a man of very exceptionally fine

parts. Better government exists, and there are signs to make the toilers believe that the "night is far spent and the day is at hand."

It is often a matter of interest to the home church to know how the married women of the mission engage in active mission work. It is impossible to give an adequate idea of her work as she is thronged with duties, complex and undefinable. As a wife and mother and housekeeper she has the manifold cares that come to every married woman. Besides these she visits in the homes; counsels those who are in perplexity and doubt; lays a guiding hand upon the shoulder of the wanderer from the narrow way; sits beside the sick; accompanies her husband on long tours, playing the little organ for meetings, making friends with the reluctant villagers, and always drawing a crowd to the tent by her presence and the presence of her children. Aside from these and other duties the wives gather heathen women into sewing or reading classes, where they teach them both arts. The end in view is to bring them to a knowledge of sin and their need of the Saviour. I have one such wife in mind who thus brought into the church several scores of women from heathen families. But, perhaps, greater than all these is the unmeasurable influence for good which they wield by establishing, in the midst of their surroundings, Christian homes. They thus set before the people an object lesson which even the dullest can comprehend. The Christian home is one of the essential factors in making the native

church thoroughly indigenous and of a healthy, normal growth.

In 1893, Lakawn and Pre provinces were visited by a severe famine, such as scourges the East at times. Even the seed rice was consumed for food, and a person was fortunate, indeed, to find a dried cocoanut husk upon which to chew for a meal. The suffering was intense. Relief committees were formed by the missionaries and much was done to alleviate the suffering. This relief work carried on at Pre was the first step toward establishing a station there.

Like Chieng Mai, Lakawn has long since outgrown its city walls. Until recently they stood in a crumbling, vine-covered condition—only a semblance of the old days that are fast passing away. They looked down in sleepy wonder upon the strange scenes they viewed, which changes have come trooping in upon the heels of the missionary, who here, as elsewhere in the East, has been the advance agent of trade. A “Columbia” chainless bicycle spins by, followed by a “Sterling.” Upon each sits easily the form of some enterprising *chau*. From the bamboo house, just under the wall, comes the hum of a sewing machine, and in the yard a man is at work with an American-made plane in his hand. Up and down beneath its heavy shade walk on their beat Siamese policemen, clad in kakhi. No wonder that the old wall seemed to sigh so heavily that it crumbled.

Eight miles to the east of Lakawn rise the mountains that must be crossed to reach the Pre prov-

ince. On one of the peaks of this chain is located the bamboo cottage, where the Lakawn missionaries sometimes flee in the hot season for a few weeks' rest in the cooler air. On the other side of the range stretches the Muang Prě province. It is four or five days' travel from Lakawn to Pre.

There is but one mission compound in Pre, but it embraces two residences, a chapel, a dispensary, and a hospital. The station was opened in 1893 by Dr. and Mrs. Briggs, who were soon joined by the Rev. and Mrs. W. F. Shields. They came direct from America to the station, and have since been a constant factor in the station's work. Dr. and Mrs. Briggs were transferred after three years, and Dr. and Mrs. Thomas took their place, with Miss Hatch to take charge of the educational work. It is necessarily so that the history of all mission stations, as to personnel, is more or less of a changing nature. Furloughs must be taken, and yet the work of the missionaries carried on. Missionaries get sick at times, desperately ill now and then, but their work must go on. Some one man must by a strenuous effort fill in the gap, and yet keep his regular duties. Oftentimes a small station has to be temporarily left without a physician that he may go to the larger one in its hour of need. The station at Pre has had its share of this coming and going of its working force. One whole year Mr. Shields was the only missionary in the station. Dr. and Mrs. Thomas and Miss Hatch were home on furlough. Mrs. Shields had been driven to America by threatened loss of her eyesight, from

a tropical eye disease. At the time she was wholly blind, and it was necessary for a young native woman to accompany her home to care for her children on the way.

The year Mr. Shields was alone in Pre, he carried on the whole work of the station, medical, educational, church, evangelistic, and itinerating, and with such success that every branch, save the first named, grew and prospered. He was able to hold the medical work in hand but not push it forward. There were fifty hospital patients during the year and twelve hundred dispensary patients, with receipts amounting to nearly two thousand rupees. Work such as this no man can long maintain single-handed.

Beyond Pre to the northeast lies the Müang Nan province, which borders upon the newly-acquired territory of the French. There are very marked signs of prosperity in this province and the rulers manifest more interest in the welfare of their people than is usual. The church here is the youngest in the mission, though the station at Chieng Rai has been organized more recently. In 1894 Dr. and Mrs. Peoples turned their faces toward this far-away city and province, which then lay untouched by Christianity save as Dr. McGilvary had visited it on some of his tours. Dr. and Mrs. Peoples have been ably reinforced by the Rev. and Mrs. David Park and by the Rev. Robert and Mrs. Irwin, M. D. As yet the most of the dwellings here are but temporary, being native houses which offer but poor protection against rain and damp

and a multitude of ants, scorpions, centipedes, and other such creatures. But these things they count as nought, thinking instead of the more than three score men and women who have been gathered into the church there.

Could we linger longer in this prosperous conservative city of Nan we would see that the work is carried on there along lines similar to what we have seen in the older stations. The mission works as an organized body, keeping certain ultimate ends in view, which all the stations push toward.

And now back across the whole country must we go to reach our most northern station, that of Chieng Rai. This post is as to time the most far removed station of the Presbyterian Church. The station is young, having been organized in 1897, but the church there is much older. It will be remembered how one of the band of seven who composed the first church, before the persecution, was a resident of this place. He became the nucleus of the church there whose history as to things spiritual reads like a page from the book of The Acts. The early band of Christians here had to look to Chieng Mai for shepherding when Dr. McGilvary could be spared from the pressure of work there. He both planted and watered, looking to God for the increase which was not withheld.

When the Dodd and Denman families occupied the place as a tentative station in 1897, the little church there began to go on to perfection. The post has now been made a regular station and the work is multiplied and multiplying. Chieng Rai

is, as to coolness, the most attractive station in the mission. It also occupies a place of strategic importance, being only a few days' travel from the interior border of China, and also being within reach of tribes which skirt the hermit nation of Tibet. One of these tribes goes by the name of Musü. Originally they came from Tibet. Many years ago Dr. McGilvary visited them and baptized several. Now there are many more added to the band. These Musü are not Shans, and speak a different language from the Laos. But like the Ka Mu people, many of them can speak the Laos tongue.

What may we not hope for Tibet through these Musü if we only meet the obligations God has placed upon us by these open doors! Other Musü villages are being touched by this Christian one, and many seem ready to cast off the old man, and put on the new man, Christ. The church in America should remember this important work among the Musü along with that of full as much promise among the Ka Mus.

Though this station is so young in years, it is admirably organized in all of its departments. There are three churches, including the one in the city, the other two being at Chieng Sen and Wieng Pa Pau.

These are our five mission stations among the Laos, with their sixteen churches, one sub-station (Lampün) and nineteen out-stations. We have had glimpses of the missionaries at their work, some sowing in virgin soil, while others are reap-

ing a harvest at other places, but all toiling happily in faith and love, though the burden is great and the heat of the sun is all but overpowering at times.

When the Laos church was in its infancy it looked to the missionaries for paternal care, and the initiative in all branches of Christian activities. This worked for both good and evil; good in that it kept the church from running ahead of its strength and understanding, and allowed of full supervision by the missionaries; evil, in that it was not developing the church into a self-propagating, self-sustaining body. But God ever cares for his own, and he showed this danger very clearly to the mission. Gradually the mission began to bend its energies toward eradicating the evil and developing the lacking element of "self-support" in the church; and to-day it stands as one of the very best illustrations upon the whole mission field of the world, of a self-supporting church, carrying on its own educational work; paying the salaries of its own native ministers; giving liberally toward the Indian famine relief fund, and the Chinese relief fund; caring for its lepers; and sending out its own missionaries to neighboring heathen tribes.

All this being true, yet the day is still far distant when the church should be left to itself. It needs the missionaries now as never before. Much oversight and training and teaching and laboring by them must yet be done in wisdom and patience before the time is ripe for independence. The church in America should arouse herself as never before to send laborers to this field. Every one of the

stations that we have visited calls for more workers: not to come to organize a new work, but to come to an organized, waiting work. The open doors are on every side. Each one should be an obligation to the Christians in America to enter. The work should be extended until it embraces the Laos of French Indo-China, of Burma, and of China itself. Especially should this obligation rest upon the Presbyterian Church, for she alone has the honor and privilege of working amid this people. In the past she has won great victories. In less than thirty-five years she has gathered more than three thousand souls, counting the dead with the living, into the visible church. But what are these few among the millions of heathen about?

And there is another reason why the church should put forth fresh efforts for the Laos. The days of her isolation are past. When the hand of Dr. McGilvary knocked at her mountain doors she lay in ease and self-indulgence. But the missionaries came. They lived Christianity and taught it, and a new life stirred in the heart of the Laos people. With the thrill of God's love came an upward striving, in material as well as spiritual things. At first the missionary was the only agency to meet this demand for better, for higher things. But now civilization is creeping in by other channels, which give mental and material blessings, but which do not point to God. Steam and electricity are finding their way into the country, and also improved methods of agriculture and manual labor. All these things and many more are good and can

be used for the furtherance of the work if the church in America keeps abreast of it. But so rapid is the pace set by the advance of these material things that the vital question has arisen, Shall the Laos-land accept our civilization, cast her idols to the bats, and yet be Godless, Christless, or shall she become one of the peoples of the Lord? There is an old parable of a man from whom the evil spirit was cast. "When the man found that the unclean spirit was gone he swept and garished his house, but alas! he did not open to God. And so the evil spirit, weary with wandering, returned to his former abode, and finding it empty, he went and took unto himself seven more spirits more wicked than himself, and they all entered in and dwelt there, and the last state of that man was worse than the first." Shall it be so with this generation of Laos? God has laid the solving of this grave, momentous question at the door of the Presbyterian Church in America.

"We are living, we are dwelling,
In a grand and awful time,
In an age on ages telling;
To be living is sublime.

"Hark! the waking up of nations,
Gog and Magog to the fray;
Hark! what soundeth? is creation
Groaning for its latter day?

"On! let all the soul within you
For the truth's sake go abroad;
Strike! let every nerve and sinew
Tell on ages, tell for God."

Appendix

CHART OF THE TAI RACE

This classification has been adopted by the Laos Mission, after tours of research and investigation made by the Rev. D. McGilvary, D. D., the Rev. W. C. Dodd, the Rev. S. C. Peoples, M. D., the Rev. Robert Irwin, and Dr. W. A. Briggs. Future investigations will probably disclose other hill tribes, but the chart is complete at this time. The system of Romanizing adopted by the mission is the International. It was first proposed by the R. G. S. E., and is now followed by Great Britain, the United States, Germany, France, and Spain. It is practically the system used in The Standard Dictionary. Vowels have their Italian sounds, consonants their English sounds.

TAI RACE

I. WESTERN SHANS

2. EASTERN SHANS

I. LAOS SHANS

2. SIAMESE SHANS

PRINCIPAL BRANCHES

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| 1. * Yuan..... | <div style="display: inline-block; vertical-align: middle;">embracing
peoples
of</div> <div style="display: inline-block; vertical-align: middle; margin-left: 10px;"> <div style="display: inline-block; vertical-align: middle;">{</div> <div style="display: inline-block; vertical-align: middle;"> Chieng Mai
 Lămpūn
 Lakawn
 Prě
 Nan
 Chieng Rai
 Chieng Sen
 † Raheng
 Luang Prabang and
 lower Me Kawng </div> </div> |
| 2. Lao | <div style="display: inline-block; vertical-align: middle;">{</div> <div style="display: inline-block; vertical-align: middle;"> Sip Sawng Păn Nă
 Chieng Tung plain and
 region adjacent </div> |
| 3. Lū | <div style="display: inline-block; vertical-align: middle;">{</div> <div style="display: inline-block; vertical-align: middle;"> Lem province
 † Found in Chieng Tung
 and northward </div> |
| 4. Kūn | |
| 5. Lem | |
| 6. Tai Nua..... | |

LAOS HILL TRIBES, MOSTLY NON-TAI

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Mūsū | 10. Ka Mu (many varieties) |
| 2. Kaw | 11. Ka Hawk |
| 3. Kūie | 12. Ka La Mět |
| 4. Enn | 13. Tai Kao |
| 5. Pawrawng | 14. Tai Dăm |
| 6. Sen Chūm | 15. Tai Moi |
| 7. Wah | |
| (a) Wild Wah | |
| (b) Buddhist Wah | |
| (c) Plang of Sam Tao
and Sam Tūan | |
| 8. Yao | |
| 9. Meo | |

* These embrace the peoples among whom the Laos Mission now has stations planted.

† The Raheng Province is occupied by a majority of Siamese Shans.

‡ They are the recent immigrants from China. "Nua" means "North."

LIST OF MISSIONARIES TO THE LAOS

BRIGGS, WM. A., M. D.....	1890
*BRIGGS, MRS.....	1890-1891
BRIGGS, MRS. (Miss Annabelle King).....	1892
CALLENDER, REV. C. R.....	1896
CALLENDER, MRS. (Miss Winnie Marks).....	1896
*CAMPBELL, MISS M. M.....	1879-1881
CAMPBELL, REV. HOWARD.....	1894
CAMPBELL, MRS. (Miss Sara E. Carlon).....	1894
CARY, A. M., M. D.....	1886-1888
*CARY, MRS. (Miss Pinkerton).....	1886-1886
CHEEK, M. A., M. D.....	1875-1886
CHEEK, MRS. (Miss Sarah B. Bradley).....	1875-1886
COLE, MISS EDNA S.....	1879-1886
(Transferred to Siam Mission.)	
COLLINS, REV. D. G.....	1886
COLLINS, MRS. (Miss Ada F. Pinkerton).....	1886
CURTIS, REV. L. W.....	1895-1899
CURTIS, MRS. (Miss Lillian S. Johnson).....	1895-1899
DENMAN, REV. C. H., M. D.....	1894
DENMAN, MRS. (Miss Katharine Andrews).....	1894
DODD, REV. W. CLIFTON.....	1886
DODD, MRS. (Miss Belle Aiken, 1887).....	1889
FLEESON, MISS KATHERINE N.....	1888
FREEMAN, REV. J. H.....	1895
FREEMAN, MRS. (Miss Emma E. Hitchcock)....	1899
(Siam, 1892.)	
GILLIES, REV. RODERICK.....	1902
GRIFFIN, MISS I. A.....	1883
GHORMLEY, MISS HATTIE E.....	1895-1898
HARRIS, REV. WM.....	1895

*Died. Figures, term of service on the field.

HARRIS, MRS. (Miss C. H. McGilvary, 1889)....	1897
HATCH, MISS JULIA A.....	1893-1902
HEARST, REV. J. P.....	1883-1884
HEARST, MRS.	1883-1884
HANSEN, C. C., M. D. (Persia, 1895).....	1898
HANSEN, MRS. (Miss Lillian D. Reinhart).....	1898
(Persia, 1893.)	
IRWIN, REV. ROBERT	1890
IRWIN, MRS. (Miss M. A. Bowman, M. D., 1895) ..	1898
MARTIN, REV. CHALMERS.....	1883-1886
MARTIN, MRS.	1883-1886
McGILVARY, REV. DANIEL (Siam, 1858).....	1867
McGILVARY, MRS. (Miss Sophia B. Bradley)....	1867
(Siam, 1860.)	
McGILVARY, MISS M. A.....	1891
McGILVARY, REV. E. B.....	1891-1894
McGILVARY, MRS. (Miss Bessie A. Paton).....	1891-1894
MacKAY, REV. C. L.....	1902
MacKAY, MRS. (Miss Jean C. Dodd).....	1902
McKEAN, JAMES W., M. D.....	1889
McKEAN, MRS. (Miss Laura B. Willson).....	1889
PARKS, REV. DAVID.....	1899
PARKS, MRS. (Miss Daisy Booth).....	1899
PEOPLES, REV. S. C., M. D.....	1882
PEOPLES, MRS. (Miss S. Wirt, 1883).....	1883
*PHRANER, REV. S. K.....	1890-1895
*PHRANER, MRS. (Miss Elizabeth Pennell).....	1890-1891
*PHRANER, MRS. (Miss E. L. Westervelt, 1884) ..	1892-1896
SHIELDS, REV. W. F.....	1893-1902
SHIELDS, MRS. (Miss Lillian Hendrickson)....	1893-1902
TAYLOR, REV. HUGH.....	1888
TAYLOR, MRS. (Miss Dora Belle Martin).....	1888
THOMAS, J. S., M. D.....	1893
THOMAS, MRS.	1893
*VROOMAN, C. W., M. D.....	1871-1873
WAITE, REV. JAMES.....	1899-1902

*Died. Figures, term of service on the field.

WAITE, MRS. (Miss Emma S. Stanley).....	1899-1902
WAITE, REV. ALEXANDER.....	1899-1902
WARNER, MISS A.....	1883-1885
WHITE, REV. HENRY.....	1902
WHITE, MRS. (Miss Charlotte Dickson).....	1902
WILSON, REV. JONATHAN (Siam, 1858).....	1868
*WILSON, MRS. (Miss Maria Wilkins, Siam, 1858-1860).	
*WILSON, MRS. (Miss Kate D. McLeers).....	1868-1885
WILSON, MISS MARGARET S.....	1893-1896
WISHARD, MISS	1883-1883

*Died. Figures, term of service on the field.

THE SHAN UPRISING

Since the writing of this book, tidings come from the Laos missionaries of a Shan uprising in the Laos provinces. It is impossible at this early date to obtain full particulars, but the principal facts are known and are, briefly, as follows:—

For several years, the Western Shans, who have enjoyed British rule in Northwest Burma, have been immigrating into the Laos province, settling in the large cities as traders or gathering into small mining companies to work iron and precious stones. Many of these Shans are of a roving, reckless nature, and such band themselves into companies for the purpose of making raids into the villages. This lawlessness has been increasing rapidly of late years.

On July 23, 1902, the Siamese Commissioner of the Lakawn province, annoyed at the escape of several of these thieves from his police, himself headed a band of eighty gendarmerie, and went in search of them. He ran them into a mining camp, which he attacked, instead of demanding their release, according to local custom, from the head man of the village. The camp was prepared for resistance, and the Commissioner had to suffer an overwhelming defeat. The Shans, flushed with victory, began to rally their fellow-countrymen, and soon had a large company of armed men, partly equipped with the arms of the Siamese gendarmerie, which they had cast aside in their flight back to Lakawn.

They then proceeded to Pre, and surprised and captured the city. For several days carnage prevailed. All Siamese, including women and children, were hacked to pieces with swords. In order that not one might escape, a reward of 300 rupees (about \$100) was offered for every

Siamese killed, which rewards were paid from the captured Siamese treasury. The Shans and many of the Laos banded themselves into searching parties, which were but lawless mobs, frenzied as a tiger by the taste of blood, and wild in their greed for the silver rupees. We are grateful to record that the Christian Laos women and men also banded themselves into searching parties, but in order to save the poor Siamese from the sword. Thus they rescued a large company of women and children and hid them in the jungle, feeding them daily at the risk of their lives. Dr. and Mrs. Thomas, who were the only missionaries in the station, were kept busy during those days of horror, caring for the wounded.

When the Shans approached Lakawn, the authorities all fled to Chieng Mai, but the city was prepared for defense, as a Dane, Mr. Jansen, rallied the forces and succeeded in repulsing the attack. The ladies and children of the station had previously been carried to Chieng Mai.

It was not until the middle of August that the troops from Bangkok arrived and peace was restored. The disturbance had not covered a month of time, but into those days were crowded those horrors and awful deeds that only a heathen people are capable of perpetrating.

This uprising is significant in that it shows the disturbed condition of the Laos provinces. The Laos sympathize with their near kinsmen, the Western Shans, for, both alike have grievances against the government. The grievances which the Shans laid before the British Consul were many, but the four principal ones were as follows:—

1. The Siamese Government refused them timber to build temples.

2. The government refused to grant passports, and subjected the Shans to imprisonment for traveling without transports.

3. The taxes were exorbitant and increasing. For instance, no one could kill a pig or a beef without paying from one-sixth to one-fourth its value as a privilege tax.

4. It was becoming more and more impracticable for

the Shans to procure homes and rice fields, or any other property.

The Laos people have many kindred causes for dissatisfaction, but their greatest grievance is the failure of the officials to remit government work in lieu of the four rupee poll tax.

We believe that the government is sincere in its efforts to establish a better system of law and order in the provinces, but this is a difficult thing to accomplish when many of the officials, both Siamese and Laos, are self-seeking and will squeeze so long as their victims can yield them a penny's worth into their coffers.

It is to be hoped that the officials have learned a wholesome lesson by this uprising, and that the government, too, will be awakened to a realization of the grave state of unrest and its just causes. If so, then the threatened recurrence of such uprisings will give place to a new era of peace and prosperity.

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